

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



19 June 2007

Mrs Mary O'Friel  
The Headteacher  
St Edmund's Catholic Primary School  
Rosebery Street  
Springhill  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B18 7PA

Dear Mrs O'Friel

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

## Introduction

Following my visit with Martin James, Additional Inspector, to your school on 6 and 7 June 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA). They also had informal conversations with most members of the teaching staff.

## Context

Since the previous monitoring visit a substantive headteacher has taken up her post. The deputy headteacher, who was previously on a fixed term contract, has been appointed on a permanent basis. A part time teacher to coordinate the support for pupils with learning difficulties has also been appointed.

## Achievement and standards

The school's most recent assessment data indicates that the proportion of pupils making satisfactory or better progress has increased since the previous monitoring visit. The majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The best progress is made by pupils in Years 2 and 6 who are all now making at least satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. In Year 2, all pupils are also making at least satisfactory progress in reading. However, in other year groups, there are still too many pupils who are not making enough progress. Although the progress made by pupils in Year 1 has improved very recently, too many of them have made insufficient progress in reading and mathematics since the previous monitoring visit. Pupils in Year 3 have not made enough progress in their reading and pupils in Year 4 have made inadequate progress in reading and mathematics.

The progress seen in lessons and in pupils' books shows a similar pattern to the school's assessment data. Again, the best progress is made by pupils in Years 2 and 6, with many making good progress in English, mathematics and science. However, too little progress has been made by pupils in Year 4. The progress made by pupils in Year 1 has shown significant improvement over recent weeks and is now satisfactory for the majority of pupils. Despite the improved rate of progress for many pupils, too many of them are still not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2005:

- raise standards in Years 1 to 6 and remedy the weaknesses in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are polite and friendly and they relate well to both adults and each other. At break times pupils play amicably and safely together, readily sharing resources and taking turns. In class most pupils display positive attitudes to their work. However, in a small number of lessons where the teaching does not engage their interest, a few pupils become restless and inattentive. Consequently, these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the previous monitoring visit. The majority of lessons are now at least satisfactory, although there is still not enough good or better teaching to enable pupils to make sufficient progress to fill the gaps in their learning quickly enough.

The school has a detailed policy for teaching and learning. Although it provides suitable advice about good teaching strategies, these are not precisely enough tailored to meet the needs of the pupils in this school. All teachers have a copy of this policy but it is not fully implemented throughout the school to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. For example, work planned to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties does not always pay sufficient regard to their individual education plans.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan appropriate and challenging learning activities. They clearly explain to pupils what they are expected to learn during the lesson. Teachers use a good range of strategies to motivate the pupils. For example, they provide opportunities for pupils to talk to each other and set specific tasks to be completed in a set period of time. Lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils make good progress. Teaching assistants provide good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers and their assistants make good use of questioning to challenge pupils and extend their understanding.

Pupils make slower progress when assessment has not been used well enough to plan lessons to meet the needs of the individual pupils. On these occasions teachers' expectations of what the pupils could achieve are frequently too low and the tasks pupils are given lack challenge. Questioning is not always well targeted to keep pupils involved in their learning and they do not have enough opportunities to answer at length.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the majority of marking does not include sufficient helpful guidance to enable pupils to improve their work. The exception to this is in Years 2 and 6 where clear development points frequently contribute to the pupils' ability to make good progress. The school has a system of providing pupils with targets in literacy and numeracy. However, these targets are not well enough matched to pupils' individual abilities, nor are they well enough known by them, to help them make as much progress as they could.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2005:

- improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 – satisfactory progress.

#### Leadership and management

The governing body's appointment of a substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher has provided the school with some much needed stability. As a result, teachers and support staff feel more secure in being able to work well together to bring about the necessary improvements. There is a good feeling of teamwork and staff are keen to support one another.

The newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by her newly appointed deputy, has set a very clear educational direction for the school. She has very quickly acquired a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and put in place appropriate actions to meet the school's most pressing needs. A joint lesson observation carried out during the monitoring visit demonstrated the headteacher's ability to assess accurately the quality of a lesson as well as provide clear development points for the teacher. Good use has been made of the skills and expertise of middle leaders and other classroom teachers to monitor, evaluate and support the work of the teaching staff. As a result, standards of teaching have improved and many pupils are making better progress. The sensible use of peer support in Year 1 has been particularly effective in raising the standard of teaching.

Lesson observations are rigorous and well documented, providing clear guidance for teachers about how to improve their practice. Where improvements to teaching have been required, appropriate support has been provided either from expertise within school or by making effective use of that available from the LA. On these occasions, expectations have been made clear and further observations planned. Scrutiny of pupils' work is carried out routinely and provides some helpful guidance for teachers. However, the written feedback is not always sufficiently focused on pupils' learning and how this can be improved.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2005:

- take a more rigorous approach to addressing areas of weakness – good.

#### External support

The school has continued to benefit from the good level of support and challenge from the LA. The appointment of a substantive senior leadership team, brought about with the assistance of the diocese and the LA, has been a particular success. Consultants, advisors and advanced skills teachers have provided good quality targeted support to improve teaching and learning as well as develop leadership skills.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

A maximum of one newly qualified teacher may be appointed.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Strategic Director of Learning and Culture in Birmingham and the Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby  
Her Majesty's Inspector