

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



2 November 2007

Mrs H Hutchison
The Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School
New Street
Gloucester
GL1 5BD

Dear Mrs Hutchison

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST PAUL'S CHURCH
OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Janet Simms, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 October 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Gloucester and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly
Additional Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 17 and 18 October 2007

Evidence

Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, scrutinised documents, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with the headteacher, a group of pupils, two governors including the chair of governors, various members of staff, and two senior officers from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been substantial changes within the team of teachers since the last monitoring visit. Three teachers, seconded from other LA schools, left St Paul's at the end of the summer term. Two teachers took up permanent posts in the school at the beginning of September. Two other teachers swapped year groups. Only three teachers are teaching the same year group as at the time of the last monitoring visit.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement has improved significantly as a result of substantially improved teaching. The overall achievement of most pupils is now satisfactory. Some pupils are making good progress, although they are still catching up following previous weak progress, and are not yet achieving to their full potential. Progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils in other years are making progress but the school's data shows that pupils in Years 1, 3 and 4 did not make enough progress by the end of the summer term. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties has also improved with many making good gains given their low starting points. The clear and effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' performance and for tracking progress are helping teachers to plan challenging, yet realistic, work that is more accurately matched to the needs of their pupils. This is a key factor in the pupils' improved progress. The progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is also increasing as teachers and teaching assistants respond to the recently improved guidance from LA specialists.

Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection, although they remain lower in writing than in other subjects. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below that found nationally. Most children make at least satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, and the school's data shows around half the children last year achieved well, reaching national expectations in most areas of learning by the end of the year. Standards in Year 2 in the summer of 2007 were very close to the national average. The pupils achieved well, and some exceptionally well, as a result of consistently good teaching. Standards in the Year 6 national tests improved significantly on those attained in 2005 and 2006. This was as a result of improved teaching supported by successful intervention strategies and the deployment of an extra teacher for part of the year. The pupils significantly exceeded the targets set for them a year earlier. The proportion attaining the nationally expected standards in

English and mathematics increased from around one half to three quarters, although the test results remained below the national average. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to maintain these improved standards. Having made better progress in recent months, some pupils are already exceeding their very modest end-of-year targets set in 2006 before the school had reliable assessment and tracking data. The school is reviewing these out-of-date targets to ensure realistically high expectations are maintained throughout this year and that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave at the end of Year 6.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- ensure that work consistently meets the needs of all pupils, in order to raise achievement in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6 – good.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being have improved since the inspection in September 2006 and are now good. Attendance has improved further since the last monitoring visit. Pupils value the rewards they get for good attendance. Robust and effective action has been taken to reduce the absence of the small minority of pupils who attended irregularly. It has resulted in some individuals making better progress now that they attend regularly. Pupils appreciate the improvements they see happening in the school and say that it is a happier place. Relationships are good, with pupils from many different backgrounds working and playing harmoniously together and welcoming new members to the school community. Behaviour is good in almost all lessons and around the school.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- develop attendance procedures so that all parents and carers become more aware of the importance of attending school regularly – good.

Quality of provision

There has been a big improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last monitoring visit. Teaching is now satisfactory; around half the lessons seen during this visit were good and none were inadequate. Good teaching is spread more widely across the school, although not yet in all classes. Pupils recognise that they are learning better now and speak of more interesting lessons this term which lead to them enjoying school more. Teachers' planning is improving with more consistent approaches. Most teachers carefully plan activities to reflect the range of needs of different groups of pupils and this is leading to improved learning by pupils of all abilities. However, some pupils feel that work is still 'sometimes too hard and sometimes too easy'. Teachers often make learning interesting through relevant links to other subjects and stimulating introductions which inspire pupils. These positive features were seen in a science lesson and led to good gains in understanding about the characteristics of fabrics and materials for cold weather activities. However, in some lessons pupils sit for too long on the carpet, getting restless when they should be moving on to the next phase of the lesson. Not all teachers make enough use of

plenary sessions at the end of lessons, missing opportunities to check progress, reinforce pupils' learning and thereby helping to extend all ability groups. Teaching assistants take increased responsibility for leading groups and continue to make important contributions towards pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties. In the best lessons pupils are beginning to be involved in assessing their own learning, for example when redrafting the opening of a story. This approach helps them to gain a sense of purpose and achievement. Marking is satisfactory but remains inconsistent. Where it is good, for example in Years 2 and 4, it tells pupils what they have learnt and also provides them with clear guidance about their next steps in learning.

The curriculum was not a focus during this visit. However, classroom displays show teachers make effective links between subjects which lead to pupils understanding ideas better. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage has improved with a good balance between teacher- and child-initiated activities indoors and out.

Aspects of care, guidance and support have improved significantly. Better information about EAL pupils is leading to improved support in classes and when withdrawn in small groups. Early identification and diagnosis of needs of pupils with learning difficulties are promoting effective intervention strategies and good support. Although pupils have targets in English and mathematics, many do not know or remember them well enough and teachers' marking does not draw sufficient links to these targets. Support for vulnerable pupils and their families through the family learning group and the learning mentor has strengthened links between school and home, helping to improve attitudes, attendance and achievement of these pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- improve the quality of teaching, in all year groups, apart from Year 2, so that all lessons are good and underachievement is eliminated – good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides good leadership and is a very effective role model for her colleagues. She has maintained her determination to raise standards and improve the quality of provision and has high expectations of pupils and staff. She is successfully involving senior managers much more in leadership roles. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well and has a wide range of significant responsibilities. Individual members of the extended senior management team (SMT) are gaining a clearer picture of the whole school. They have been supported well by the headteacher and by working alongside LA consultants, for example in conducting joint observations of lessons. The role of subject leaders is developing but, at a time of staff changes, is not securely established. There are some inconsistencies in the way the role is being interpreted and some subject leaders are yet to make an impact across the school. Effective planning procedures enable the school to respond quickly to information gained from robust and regular monitoring by the headteacher and SMT.

There have been substantial changes to the membership of the governing body since the last monitoring visit and governors recognise the need for more training to

address the needs of new members and also to ensure confidence in all aspects of the governing body's collective responsibilities. Governors are increasingly involved in making key decisions but do not all have a sufficiently full picture of the work of the school to enable them to hold it to account.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006:

- develop the expertise of the senior managers, the subject coordinators and governors to enable them to monitor the work of the school rigorously and deal more effectively with weaknesses – good.

External support

The local authority continues to provide good support. Having fully implemented its statement of action for the first year, it has produced an effective new plan detailing a comprehensive range of actions to be implemented in partnership with staff and governors. The LA is careful to ensure that its involvement helps build the capacity of the school. Support has been well focused and responsive to the needs of the school and, consequently, it is having a good impact on the quality of leadership and on teaching and learning.

Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen the roles of governors and subject leaders so that they have a clearer understanding of the school's performance and governors, in particular, are better placed when taking strategic decisions and holding the school to account.