

22 May 2008

Ms H Okrafo-Smart
Interim Headteacher
The Bardney Church of England and Methodist School
Henry Lane
Bardney
Lincolnshire
LN3 5XJ

Dear Ms H Okrafo-Smart

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BARDNEY CHURCH of ENGLAND and METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Colin Henderson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 May, 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikić

H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BARDNEY CHURCH of ENGLAND and METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 20-21 May 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, a representative from the governing body, the School Improvement Partner (SIP), and a Senior School Improvement Advisor from the local authority (LA).

Context

A newly qualified teacher left the school at Easter and has been replaced on a temporary basis. A phased return to work has taken place following the long term absence of a teaching assistant, with responsibilities staged to support the return. Three new permanent governors have been appointed; two community governors bringing finance and school improvement expertise, and one parent. Governor vacancies remain for two parents and one LA representative. The school has continued to have difficulty in sustaining quality cover to facilitate management time for the deputy headteacher.

Achievement and standards

The school has strengthened assessment and tracking procedures since the previous visit by analysing levels of progress gained in literacy and numeracy. This has highlighted a particular weakness in writing in Years 2 to 5, especially the achievement of boys. Work with a targeted group of pupils is beginning to improve their motivation and confidence and tackle their slow progress. The school has improved the way it measures progress which has sharpened the tracking of key skills. In addition pupils in Years 3 to 6 have undertaken a standardised reading test which has identified a significant number across the age range who are not reading well enough to support overall progress. Tracking has led to appropriate target setting and the introduction of guided reading and writing is now providing regular opportunities to develop pupil's skills. Parental involvement has increased recently to accelerate the work on reading. Although a wide range of initiatives have been undertaken to accelerate progress leaders are not evaluating them in a systematic way to identify the impact on standards, or to support adjustments to provision quickly enough.

The actions taken by the school are providing a secure basis for identifying pupils who are not meeting age related standards in reading, writing and numeracy, and gaps in learning. The regular moderation of work samples across the age and ability range for writing is crucial as teacher assessment is not yet secure. However, leaders are not yet routinely evaluating the progress of cohorts or groups of learners to provide a detailed overview of pupils' achievement. In lessons observed there was evidence that pupils' progress is improving but remains uneven. Standards and achievement of pupils in Years 2 and 3 are particularly weak, and further action is

required as a priority to accelerate rates of progress to address recent disruption to learning.

The use of assessment for planning lessons to meet pupils' needs continues to be a priority for Years 2 to 5 despite input from a LA consultant. The school has recognised the need to refine planning requirements to ensure that the assessment of learning during lessons is used more effectively so that teaching reacts to how well children are learning.

All teaching assistants have completed training to support the delivery of intervention programmes supplemented by a visit to a partner school to observe good practice. A range of intervention work is now in place for identified pupils to improve reading, writing and numeracy although it is too soon to assess the benefits.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- Improve achievement and standards, especially for higher attaining pupils and involve all pupils thoroughly in target setting and in measuring progress – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Pupils continue to behave well. They are eager to learn and work successfully together in group and partner activities. They say that they enjoy school and this is shown in their improving attendance and punctuality. The school tracks attendance carefully and has effective measures to follow-up any concerns. Attendance is in line with the national average. Effective work with parents has reduced term time holidays by 40% compared with the equivalent period last year.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- Implement successfully the plans that have been drawn up to improve pupils' attendance – good

Quality of provision

Since the last visit teaching has improved with more good practice and less inadequate teaching. Lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work continue to show inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of what pupils' should achieve in lessons, particularly the more able pupils. Teachers manage their classes well to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. They use interactive whiteboards effectively to sustain pupils' attention in whole class activities, although their use in extending the learning of particular groups of pupils is not developed enough. Teachers have increased the opportunities for pupils to check on their own progress, for example by encouraging them to assess if they have achieved the lesson objective. 'Comment time' has been introduced since the last visit to enable pupils to respond to points arising from the marking of their work. This is becoming more effective, but is still not developed sufficiently in each class to guide pupils on what they have to do specifically to improve their work.

Teachers' use of assessments to plan learning activities that match the range of pupils' needs is not always used effectively. Not all teachers have a secure

understanding of what they should expect their pupils to achieve and planning does not build consistently on what pupils already know. This results in slower than expected progress in some lessons. There are examples of good use being made of assessments to identify pupils who need support or further extension in their learning. However, the partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is not always effective in ensuring that pupils receive the guidance needed.

The curriculum continues to improve to interest and challenge pupils. In March, an 'integrated week' successfully linked subjects together. It was enjoyed greatly by pupils and some good work resulted. The school is currently building a more cohesive programme with some good enrichment from focus days, for example, 'India Day'.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- Ensure that teachers use accurate assessments of pupils' progress to devise lessons that interest and challenge all pupils - satisfactory

Leadership and management

A high priority has been placed on the induction programme for the new temporary teacher to ensure consistency in delivery of key policies. Mentor arrangements have been set up and external support arranged to assist with planning. The focus on management and monitoring systems has led to improvements in the school environment, and pupils' personal development. The additional assessment information is increasingly providing leaders with a more secure view of strengths and weaknesses across the school, and is helping to make decisions about the deployment of teaching assistants. Expectations have now been set for teaching assistants through training, and monitoring arrangements devised to support the delivery of intervention programmes.

Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have continued to strengthen their subject knowledge and expertise working alongside LA consultants. This has supported classroom observation for the newly introduced guided reading and writing, and work scrutiny. Evaluating writing standards is now supported by a portfolio of work which tracks the progress of nominated pupils across the age range and provides a focus for staff in identifying the next steps in developing writing skills. In numeracy, the LA consultant has successfully modelled approaches to assessment which have been used by the subject leader to help staff devise assessment tasks, to improve the judgements made pupils work.

Leaders have identified inconsistency in the use of assessment as a barrier to good progress. Although this has been a priority area in two classes, supported by training, progress has been limited. This weakness has not been tackled strategically by tailoring monitoring activities to support the embedding of assessment as a tool for teaching or by effectively sharing good practice within the school. Monitoring, review and evaluation processes are not yet sharp enough to provide timely feedback to support improvement. This means that leaders are sometimes not able to demonstrate securely the impact they are having on teaching and learning, or to respond quickly enough where progress is weak, as in Years 2 and 3. Given that

there is now stability in the school, leadership time is not always used effectively to accelerate progress where it is most needed.

Despite changes within the governing body a core group have been active through visits and meetings. They recognise that it will take time to address the legacy of disruption, and weaknesses in teaching. However, the school does not yet have a strategic overview of standards linked to national expectations to drive improvement at a faster rate. Governors need more detailed monitoring and evaluation information to enable them to track progress against priorities more precisely.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- Ensure that those in leadership and management positions monitor their work rigorously, take urgent action to address shortcomings and evaluate the impact of their actions – satisfactory

External support

The SIP has continued to provide effective support for the deputy headteacher in refining the school's assessment and tracking systems, and in confirming classroom observation judgements. LA consultants have provided training for staff and individuals linked to planning and the use of assessment, in addition to specific work with subject leaders. The LA has continued to support the development of teaching assistants by providing training on a range of intervention strategies to increase knowledge and understanding of materials. A partner school has been recently identified to support the sharing of practice. The main input to date has been visits by teaching assistants to observe good practice in the delivering of intervention work.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that monitoring activities are well matched to priorities to support rigorous evaluation of the impact of the school's actions, with appropriate follow up to embed good practice.
- Take steps to address weaknesses in standards and achievement of pupils in Year 2 and 3.