

10 June 2008

The Headteacher  
St. George's Church of England Community Primary School  
Gainsborough  
Lincolnshire  
DN32 1YN

Dear Mrs Barry

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff, pupils, the local authority (LA) and the vice chair of governors gave when I inspected your school on 9 June 2008, and for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 17-18 October 2007, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' rate of progress and standards in English, mathematics and science
- ensure that the provision in the Foundation Stage meets children's needs
- improve assessment procedures so that they inform teaching and raise standards
- improve the work of the subject co-ordinators in supporting teachers and raising standards.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The school has made good progress with improving pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Change for the better has occurred because teachers plan lessons more thoroughly and subject co-ordinators' improvement plans are working. The curriculum is more interesting; hence, pupils' behaviour and response to lessons are much better.

Children's attainment on entry to school is well below that expected nationally. It is particularly low in early reading and writing skills and in their personal development. The school's assessment information indicates that as groups, pupils in Years 2 and 6 will not reach the standards expected in English, mathematics and science. However, greater proportions of pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets and

national expectations this year, than previously. The majority of pupils have made the progress expected of pupils nationally over the last two years in English and mathematics in Year 6, from low starting points. These two subjects have rightly been the focus of attention for improvement. Gaps in pupils' knowledge in science are holding back their improvement and are an area for closer attention.

Provision in the Foundation Stage shows good improvement since the last inspection. All staff have worked together well to meet children's needs better and consequently improve their learning. The use of the small outside area is purposeful and worthwhile. Next year, the Foundation Stage will have the use of a much larger 'outside classroom', which has just been completed and is well equipped. Teaching seen was purposeful. It engaged children in much discussion, and developed their thinking about the story in the big book they were reading with a teaching assistant. Children's social development improves quickly. They help one another, listen well in the main to others and look after the class 'pets'. 'Free flow' works well. Children concentrate hard on tasks they are given by adults. They make choices as they work, including changing activities, which they do sensibly. The school has created a particularly comprehensive action plan for the Foundation Stage, which it is working through successfully.

The good improvements in assessment procedures are resulting in pupils' better progress. Teachers follow a common approach to teaching lessons. They are introduced with clear targets for learning and end with a review of what pupils have learned. There has been an improvement in the level of challenge in lessons because teachers take greater note of what was learned or not in previous lessons. This information is used to plan the following week's lessons. Those pupils, for example, who have not understood all that was taught, have opportunities to have another go. The teaching seen considered the match of small group work to pupils' abilities and needs effectively and pupils made good progress. Pupils understand why they have targets and find them useful. They said that they are useful reminders of what they need to learn next or remember to do. Pupils have suitable individual targets for English and mathematics. Evident from observation of one lesson, older pupils' emotional responses when watching a fishing boat facing a giant wave were muted. This aspect of pupils' responses, the capacity to express their feelings, is an area for development.

There has been good progress with the rigorous evaluation of the school's work. Strong leadership and purposeful delegation of responsibilities from the headteacher have helped the team of subject coordinators to become more effective. Subject leadership roles are clearer and pupils' academic targets are accurately based on reliable information. Subject coordinators have carried out a thorough analysis of the school's needs and they know what the school needs to do to improve further. The employment of teaching assistants who share their expertise in information and communication technology (ICT), music and modern foreign languages (MFL) helps make teaching in these subjects more consistent and successful. Policies in many areas of the school's work have been agreed and behaviour management and rewards are more consistent. Pupils' behaviour is generally good and is well managed.

The school has benefited from the 'Intensifying Support Programme' provided by the LA. The staff report that they have been well supported by the visiting specialists provided over the last year. The advice received has been of good quality. The LA statement of action has been revised and the shortcomings in the original statement of action have been adequately addressed. The statement contains targets for pupils' performances and teaching that are realistic and achievable. The school has adapted the statement and developed detailed action plans from it. It is working successfully to implement these.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry

Additional Inspector