

Prospects Learning Services Ltd
Prospects House
19 Elmfield Road
Bromley, Kent
BR1 1LT

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 8315 1250
Direct F 020 8315 1279
Elisabeth.Linley@ofsted.gov.uk



21 April 2009

Mrs Gillian Coffey
Executive Headteacher
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Montacute Road
Morden
SM4 6RL

Dear Mrs Coffey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Michael Milton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 31 March and 1 April 2009, 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 October 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

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following qualification: with the agreement of the monitoring HMI.

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 Archdiocese of Southwark and the Head of School Improvement for Merton.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 31 March and 1 April 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work; scrutinised documents; and met with the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and managers, members of the governing body, a representative for the local authority and pupils from the school council. Inspectors also met with the new executive headteacher and associate headteacher.

Context

During the spring term 2009, a soft federation was formed between St Teresa's Catholic Primary School and The Ursuline High School. As a result, it has been arranged that, from the beginning of the summer term 2009, the headteacher of The Ursuline High School becomes executive headteacher of St Teresa's, with an associate headteacher who will join St Teresa's in a full-time capacity from May 2009. The current executive headteacher will remain involved with the school to aid transition of the school's leadership during the summer term.

Since the last monitoring visit, further staff changes have taken place. These changes reflect staff leaving the school, others moving class within the school and the appointment of a new teacher from January 2009. There are currently two teachers who are employed on a long-term supply basis at the school.

The number of pupils on roll has increased, mainly as a result of children joining the nursery in January 2009. There are now 460 pupils on roll. Pupil mobility continues to be an issue for the school, with a larger than usual number of pupils joining at different times during the school year. The proportion of pupils joining the school who have English as an additional language or are new to English is also increasing.

Achievement and standards

Validated data from the 2008 national assessments and tests taken by pupils in Years 2 and 6 show that standards overall had improved from the previous year. In Key Stage 1, results in reading, writing and mathematics had improved and, in Key Stage 2, there was overall improvement, especially in view of the better results in English, particularly at the higher levels. Although there was a slight decline in the mathematics results, an improvement at the higher level was seen. The Key Stage 2 science results saw a decline from the previous year; however, improvements in the science curriculum and its delivery are being made. The science coordinator continues to model teaching to a high quality and this is having a positive impact where team teaching takes place. In these classes in particular, pupils' achievement is improving. Pupils often have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy

skills in science and their investigative skills are also developing well. Notwithstanding these improvements, pupils' achievement through school continues to be inconsistent. Too much teaching remains satisfactory at best. As a result, pupils continue to underachieve where teaching is not as good as it should be.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards in English and science and ensure greater consistency in standards in mathematics by matching work more closely to pupils' needs and challenging able pupils more effectively so that they make better progress – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Pupils appreciate the changes that have been made in school, although some say they find the many staff changes unsettling. Pupils comment positively on improvements to the learning environment; they were pleased to be able to choose the name of a newly created classroom, now called 'the Learning Paradise'. They report that improved behaviour and better resources help them to make more progress in lessons. It is clear that, when they are given well-planned, engaging opportunities, pupils work effectively in groups and on their own. In an assembly, pupils were thoughtful, well behaved and keen to participate. The school council is proud of its contribution to the playground improvements, although members feel that behaviour can still be boisterous at playtime. Minutes of council meetings are kept and, from these, it is evident that pupils have suggested other improvements; however, the minutes do not make clear the school's response to the suggestions. Another change pupils have noticed is the much improved marking of their work; however, pupils rarely respond to the questions and helpful comments that many teachers make.

Quality of provision

The many staff changes since the school was inspected have resulted in a significant need for training, particularly to ensure that the standard pupils attain in their work is assessed with accuracy. Although training has begun, its impact is not yet evident and the accuracy of assessment information cannot be assured. As a result, some teachers are not planning well enough to meet the needs of all pupils in lessons. Where teaching is consistently good and better, pupils are usually challenged to do their best. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, an excellent pace and very well-focused questions enabled pupils to develop effective writing skills. Success criteria for the lesson were consistently reviewed and more able pupils were clearly aware of the requirements of higher-level punctuation. However, inadequate teaching remains and too much teaching continues to be satisfactory at best. As a result, a significant minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Provision overall for pupils who have learning difficulties, or who have English as an additional language, has improved. A broad range of intervention programmes are now in place. Teachers and teaching assistants have received training to aid their

understanding of how these strategies should be implemented. Withdrawal groups provide support, for example, for pupils with specific learning needs. However, these sessions sometimes lack a brisk variety of activities for the pupils involved and, as a result, their enjoyment of the session wanes. In lessons, planning may well include specific activities for pupils with learning difficulties but these activities are not always fully effective, or well enough resourced, to help pupils to learn. The school is not yet assured that all staff are delivering the support effectively. Systems to track the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils are now in place. A more rigorous approach is being implemented to gather and record assessment data and to analyse pupils' progress by groups and by class.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise the quality of teaching so that a much greater proportion is good – inadequate
- improve the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils who are learning English so that they make more sustained progress – satisfactory

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher continues to provide outstanding strategic leadership for the school. She has worked well with governors and staff, and communication links between governors, staff and parents are much improved. Governors are also developing in their capability to hold the school more effectively to account for the progress made and the impact of action taken to raise standards.

Part of the school's work this term has been to improve the learning environment. Building work is ongoing and improvements to the space for learning have been and continue to be made. Displays around the school are also making a positive difference. For example, an attractive display of pupils' work showing chairs that had been created by the pupils made clear to others that learning in this area of the curriculum had been fun!

A major focus of the school's work to raise standards continues to include all leaders and managers in all subjects becoming more effective in their respective roles and to improve provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. Managers have worked hard to improve their skills and have benefited from consultant support through the Keys to Success programme. Since the last inspection, they have written detailed subject and aspect evaluations and produced action plans. These plans include many actions for next term. However, some action points are insufficiently precise and success criteria do not focus explicitly on raising pupils' standards and how this is to be measured. Leaders have taken a sound range of actions to improve provision for their subjects and areas of responsibility. However, their evaluation of the impact of these actions on pupils' achievement is underdeveloped.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of leadership and management by establishing better links with governors and parents and setting the right priorities for improvement that will raise standards – satisfactory

External support

Since the last monitoring visit, appropriate training has been provided by the local authority for the many staff who are new to the school. The staff have benefited from working with consultants and advanced skills teachers and from bespoke support for middle leaders and managers provided through London City Challenge. Governors have appreciated the support provided by the local authority, for example, with training and help to secure the school's leadership. The soft federation with The Ursuline High School has secured the school's leadership for the next seven terms as the role of the current executive headteacher, a national leader of education, comes to an end. There is a recognition by all concerned that an increased pace of change to aid school improvement is now required.

The school continues to benefit from funding provided through London City Challenge, which has enabled the current improvements to the school's building and planning for the future work that is required. The local authority is aiding the school similarly through its funding arrangements to support the school's leadership.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the security of teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science so that tracking of pupils' progress and the analysis of data gathered are both rigorous and accurate.
- Ensure all leaders evaluate the impact of action taken and use this information effectively to plan next steps with clear success criteria against which the school's progress can be measured.