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4 May 2010

Mrs Lesley Allen
St Michael's on the Mount Church of England Primary School
Park Lane
Bristol
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Dear Mrs Allen

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 April 2010, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my particular thanks to pupils with whom I held discussions.

Since the last inspection four of the ten teaching staff have left the school. They have been replaced by new members of staff. A new chair and vice-chair of governors have been appointed along with a number of new governors. The number of pupils on role has slightly decreased while the proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language has increased.

As a result of the inspections on 30 April and 1 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in writing, in order to raise standards, especially in Year 2
- implement a systematically planned curriculum tailored to the specific needs of those pupils learning to speak English as an additional language, so that their attainment increases as quickly as possible
- celebrate and promote the importance of frequent attendance, particularly with the very small minority who do not come to school often enough.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The headteacher has continued to ensure that all staff have remained focused on raising standards and improving the progress made by pupils. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are sound and good plans are in place to address areas of weakness. Pupils' progress is being tracked well with information on their attainment



being regularly collected. The accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is now more accurate due to improved systems of moderation. A good central system to monitor the progress of pupils towards challenging targets is in place so that those who are falling behind are quickly identified. Good support and intervention programmes have been put in place to help these pupils catch up.

The attainment and learning needs of pupils varies across the year groups. However, the level of skills of pupils entering the school is generally well below average. Pupils' attainment at the end of year 2 has risen over the past two years, particularly in reading. A range of phonic intervention programmes and one-to-one reading support have had a positive impact on reading standards. In 2009 standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer than average pupils attained the higher levels, particularly in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 have remained broadly similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection. In 2009 standards in English were broadly average but they were below average in mathematics and science. During Years 3 to 6 these pupils made satisfactory progress in English but less than expected progress in mathematics. Lesson observations during this inspection and the school's tracking data indicate that pupils are now making better progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics.

The curriculum has been reviewed and a topic-based structure has been introduced that draws on more engaging projects. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are carefully assessed when they join the school and appropriate provision is put in place to address their needs. All teachers have received training on how best to support these pupils and, as a consequence, they are making similar progress to their peers.

Teaching is being regularly monitored and successful action is being taken to improve practice. All the lessons observed during this inspection were at least satisfactory and some were good. All lessons were characterised by good relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils responded well to the opportunities they were given to actively engage in their learning. In the better lessons effective use was made of questioning and paired and group work to check and develop pupils' learning. However, in some lessons, tasks lacked sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able, and the pace of the lesson delivery limited the progress that could be made.

The school has not been successful in improving attendance. Although it has reduced the proportion of pupils who persistently do not attend school, the overall level of attendance has declined since the last inspection. The attendance of pupils is well below the national average and too many pupils arrive late for school. Senior leaders have taken a number of sensible actions to improve attendance, such as contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence and regularly celebrating good attendance and punctuality during a Friday assembly. They also work closely with the Education Welfare Service. However, the school should work more closely and effectively with parents to ensure better attendance and punctuality. This issue

needs to be urgently addressed if pupils are to benefit from the improved teaching in the school.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector