

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 4234
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0300 123 4234
Ofstedhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk

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Mrs Joy Lowman
Headteacher
St John's Gosport Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Grove Road
Gosport
Hampshire
PO12 4JH

Dear Mrs Lowman

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and governors gave when I inspected your school on 29 April 2010, for the time you gave to our planning meeting and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I should also like to thank the pupils I met for their important contribution to the inspection.

There have been no significant contextual changes to the school since the last inspection. As a result of the inspection on 6 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics
- ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged
- ensure that pupils are always aware of their targets and are well guided on how to reach these.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

inadequate progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been significantly below the national average since 2006. The progress made by pupils during their time at the school has also been significantly below what might



be expected. Following the last inspection, attainment fell in 2008 but rose in 2009. In that year, attainment in English was closer to the national average and pupils made progress that was more broadly in line with expectations. The school's accurate tracking and the lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken during the monitoring inspection indicate that this trend of improvement is likely to continue. Nevertheless, attainment overall has remained stubbornly low and too few pupils achieve the higher levels. Improvements to leadership and teaching are beginning to have an impact on outcomes. However, change has been too slow until now and pupils have not yet made sufficient progress to catch up on past underperformance.

Pupils are now making better progress because teachers have high expectations and more consistently plan lessons that are relevant, engaging and focused on learning. Teachers also make better use of assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of the full range of abilities and stretch the more able. These pupils say that they enjoy the more challenging work that they are given. Marking and oral feedback are also now better placed to provide pupils with the information they need to improve their work and achieve their personal targets. A revised marking policy is understood by pupils and teachers. Consequently, most pupils know their targets and are able to explain with growing confidence what they need to do to improve. In some cases, however, pupils do not get the opportunities they need to respond to their teacher's written guidance. Pupils are also benefiting from the focus on using talk to improve writing and to develop confidence in the use of mathematical terms. Their consistently good behaviour, enthusiasm and positive relationships with teachers and each other contribute strongly to the steadily improving rates of progress.

Leaders at all levels are focused on improving outcomes for pupils and are involved in a full range of monitoring and development activities; there is no complacency and there are no excuses. As a result of their actions, the quality of teaching is improving steadily and there are now more consistently good and sometimes outstanding lessons. The school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and responding to any identified weaknesses are also robust. Indeed, no inadequate teaching was observed during the monitoring visit. Teachers are now more fully involved in school improvement and benefit from well-focused professional development that is closely linked to the school's plan for raising attainment. Targets are more challenging and there is evidence from the school's tracking and regular pupil progress meetings that pupils are working towards these more consistently. These systems have helped to raise expectations further, to identify underperformance earlier and to put in place better support for pupils who are currently underachieving. Together this represents the school's strengthening capacity to improve further. However, many of these well-devised changes are relatively recent. They are embedding quickly but are only now beginning to bring about a discernible impact on the progress made by pupils and the outcomes they achieve.



Overall, school self-evaluation is broadly accurate and increasingly analytical. Governors are well informed and share the school's drive to raise attainment. They offer timely challenge and are increasingly involved in monitoring the progress made by groups and individual pupils. Nevertheless, a sharper focus on attendance is needed as this is also consistently below the national average.

The school welcomes the well-targeted support provided by local authority advisers and consultants. The school improvement partner is highly knowledgeable and also offers sharply focused support and challenge. This means that the local authority has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and which aspects of its work need to improve most urgently. Through close partnership with the school, the impact of support is beginning to be seen, particularly in terms of the teachers' strengthened subject knowledge, their more confident use of assessment and the steadily improving rates of pupil progress. Nevertheless, this support has not yet had a sustained impact on improving outcomes.

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

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

