

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com



5 February 2015

Mrs Wendy Jacobs
Headteacher
Parish Church C of E Junior School
Warrington Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 4BH

Dear Mrs Jacobs

Special measures monitoring inspection of Parish Church C of E Junior School

Following my visit with Ken Bryan, additional inspector, to your school on 3–4 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint up to two newly qualified teachers to start no earlier than September 2015. They should be deployed to year groups with the strongest teaching and be supported through the local authority's programme and network for newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Croydon and the Diocese of Southwark.

Yours sincerely
Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least typically good by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations for all groups of pupils
 - consistently set all groups of pupils challenging tasks
 - give pupils activities which interest them and help them to sustain concentration
 - check pupils' progress regularly in lessons and move them on quickly if they are not progressing rapidly enough
 - mark pupils' work in a way that shows them what to do next
 - give pupils enough chance to act on their comments and so improve their work.
- Raise pupils' achievement so that it is at least good by:
 - improving the rates of progress in Years 3 and 4, in particular
 - ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects and so increase their progress in writing
 - ensuring that the gaps between those pupils who are supported by additional funding and others close quickly.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - weaknesses in teaching are eliminated rapidly
 - there are efficient and accurate systems by which the school can measure the progress of pupils and groups of pupils
 - school improvement plans clearly focus on the need for pupils to make faster progress
 - planning for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs clearly includes the next intended steps in learning
 - subject leaders make a stronger contribution to raising standards in their areas of responsibility
 - leaders provide accurate and timely information to governors which gives a clearer analysis of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - governors are robust in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

An external review of governance to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, a group of pupils and some parents. Discussions were held with members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE).

Context

Two teachers left the school in December. Two more joined in January with responsibility for classes in Year 3 and Year 5. There has been some redeployment of class teachers. Senior leaders' roles and responsibilities have been fine-tuned to support the current priorities. The school is consulting about a possible change from voluntary-controlled to voluntary-aided status.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Teachers' expectations of pupils are now informed by consistently aspirational targets across all year groups. On average, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making progress that is at least in line with minimum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils in different classes and year groups still make widely different progress across these subjects. For example, while pupils in some classes are now starting to make good or better progress in reading or mathematics, in other classes they are not.

Pupils in all year groups are making more progress in writing. They are getting more high-quality writing opportunities in English and in other subjects. Teachers have been able to set consistent expectations for pupils because writing for any purpose is now recorded in one book. Opportunities to write at different lengths and to review each other's work are helping pupils to develop a broader range of writing skills. Leaders are rightly determined to speed up pupils' progress further because tracking shows that for some classes, pupils are not making up for previous lost ground.

Leaders' new systems to monitor achievement have quickly identified that gaps in the progress made by some groups of pupils remain a concern. While disadvantaged pupils in some classes are catching up with others by making faster progress, too many are still falling behind in either English or mathematics. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs are making inconsistent progress compared with others in their year groups. Termly checks by leaders and teachers have also exposed an urgent need to address emerging gaps between the progress of boys and girls, and those between pupils of White British, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds.

The quality of teaching

Teaching is beginning to improve because teachers have a better understanding of how to promote good learning and are willing to try new approaches. For example, some teachers are increasingly skilled at planning activities that help pupils who are making different rates of progress or who have different depths of understanding. Some teachers use their subject knowledge well to select activities that engage pupils by giving them an appropriate challenge to overcome. In some cases, teachers' support helps pupils to make progress with timely questions that encourage pupils to explain their understanding. However, this is not consistently practiced, even by the strongest teachers. Sometimes, teachers' questioning and support is too focused on helping pupils complete a task rather than deepening their understanding.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but not to the same standard. At its best, marking shines a spotlight on pupils' most important errors and misconceptions. Some teachers are increasingly including insightful written questions or comments to deepen pupils' understanding. On these occasions, pupils are able to make good use of improvement time. This is not consistent enough. Some teachers have developed good verbal feedback skills which could now be used to improve the written feedback they give to pupils.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are increasing and some teaching carefully ensures that pupils of different abilities are challenged effectively. However, this remains a developmental priority for many teachers. Some teachers' subject knowledge is weak and impedes their confidence to adjust activities or resources to suit pupils' abilities. For instance, there is an over-use of repetitive exercises in some mathematics work. Teachers and teaching assistants look for opportunities to assess pupils' learning. However, they do not focus consistently enough on the depth of pupils' understanding to help them with their next steps. Teachers are not always assessing pupils' progress in lessons well enough.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning are a growing strength. Teachers' chosen activities in English, mathematics and other subjects are more varied and are having a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm and engagement. Pupils are most keen to learn and sustain their focus when teachers pitch the work at the right level. It is to pupils' credit that even when work is not at the right level, they often show the resilience to sustain their concentration and make the best of the opportunities they are given. However, in a small number of instances, pupils become quietly disengaged in learning because weak teaching is not meeting their needs.

Pupils' overall attendance is still in line with the national average. Leaders' sustained emphasis on reducing persistent absence is focused. They give careful attention to the attendance of key pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with

special educational needs. Rates of persistent absence are falling because of a broad range of well-targeted strategies which give appropriate support and challenge to pupils and their families.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher's direct, honest and thorough approach has brought significant capacity to the school. She has introduced an extensive range of frequent and in-depth checks on the quality of teaching. Senior leaders' increasing involvement in these checks is improving the school's ability to identify key strengths and weaknesses accurately. Teachers' knowledge of what they must do to improve is increasing and welcomed by most because of the open, insightful and constructive guidance they are receiving from leaders. Newly qualified teachers are improving their practice and speak highly of the support that leaders give.

Teachers' assessment of writing has improved because leaders have given them better guidance about effective practices. Moderation is contributing to more consistent standards of assessment. Teachers express increased confidence in assessing the quality of pupils' writing. Leaders conduct targeted spot checks guided by pupil progress data. Checks on teachers' assessment of reading and mathematics have identified that further work is required to ensure they are consistently accurate.

Leaders have improved their systems for sharing information about the progress of pupils. Termly checks include a range of analysis about individual pupils, groups of pupils, classes and year groups. Leaders are beginning to develop capacity at all levels by introducing a range of reviews and discussions for teachers, with a clear focus on increasing pupils' progress. Teachers, year group leaders and subject leaders are now able to identify and act on key priorities for their work.

Leaders have begun to use the information about pupils' progress to inform the way they provide for and support key pupil groups. They have responded quickly to the external review of the use of the pupil premium. Resources are now targeted at intervention classes for pupils who are making the least progress. Assessment data are being used to plan how best to organise these support groups. Leaders' checks of the impact on pupils' progress have swiftly identified wide variation in the quality of this support.

The external review of governance has been now completed. Governors fully accept its findings and work has begun to prioritise its key recommendations in a governing body action plan. The governing body meets more frequently and is better informed by leaders' evaluations of achievement and teaching. Governors are asking leaders to explain the work of the school in greater detail. Governors have adopted specific roles and talk with more knowledge and confidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They frequently conduct focused visits to school. This is helping them to have a better understanding of the school so that they can ask the right questions of leaders.

External support

The SBDE has given sound guidance to the governing body about how to improve its practices. Leaders and teachers are supported by a network of good practitioners in other schools brokered by the SDBE.

Leaders receive regular challenge at half-termly school progress review meetings from the SDBE and the local authority. Rigorous checks against milestones in the school improvement plan ensure that leaders are also offered the support they need to maintain the pace of improvement.

The local authority has brokered support from the Synaptic Trust, which has added capacity to leaders' evaluation of teaching and provided individual support for class teachers. The local authority's recent review of teaching gave independent affirmation that leaders' views of the quality of teaching are accurate. Led by the local authority, the external reviews of governance and the pupil premium have sharpened leaders' and governors' knowledge in these areas and have quickly led to better practice.