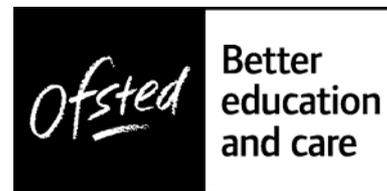


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7 July 2005

Mr I Birtwell  
Acting Headteacher  
Holy Trinity CE VC Primary School  
Beridge Road  
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Essex  
CO9 1JH

Dear Mr Birtwell

### **Implementation of Holy Trinity CE VE School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr A Knight HMI to your school on 29 and 30 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the seventh monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made good progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Head of Schools Service for Essex and the Diocese of Chelmsford. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF HOLY TRINITY CE VE SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the seventh monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit eight parts of lessons, one registration session and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the chair of governors, senior members of staff, representatives from the LEA and the substantive headteacher who joins the school in September. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils. Samples of work were examined and a range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the chair of the governing body, two representatives from the LEA, one representative from the Diocese and the substantive headteacher.

The acting headteacher leaves the school at the end of this term. The school is set to start next term with a complete team of permanent teachers and a substantive headteacher. While some senior members of staff will have new areas of responsibility, there will be greater continuity in staffing than has been experienced by the school for some time.

The provisional results from the National Curriculum tests for 2005 show improvement in Key Stage 1, especially in reading at all levels including Level 3. The percentages of pupils achieving Level 2B or above in writing and mathematics have also increased significantly. However, while the results for science at Level 3 have improved, the percentages of pupils achieving Level 3 in writing and mathematics have not changed and remain low. The results for Key Stage 2 show some improvement in English and science but the school's targets for Key Stage 2 were not reached and the results for mathematics showed a significant fall especially at Level 5 or above.

Standards in lessons were broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils in the Year 1 class showed a secure understanding of phonics and pupils in a Year 3/4 class read clearly and with sustained concentration. Good examples of extended writing were seen in several classes. However, many pupils in a Year 2 class experienced difficulty with simple fractions and some pupils in a Year 6 class struggled with percentages. Standards in the Foundation Stage were above expectations as the pupils listened very carefully to the teacher and each other and showed a high level of personal control when using musical instruments.

The quality of teaching has improved and was only unsatisfactory in one lesson. In three lessons the quality of teaching was good and in two lessons very good. In the lessons that were satisfactory or better the teachers' classroom management was very good and positive working relationships were evident. Questioning skills have improved and most teachers skilfully extended the pupils' answers. Work was generally well sequenced although on two occasions the pupils required further consolidation before being able to work in groups. In one case this was identified

quickly and the pupils were given appropriate guidance. Lesson objectives were used consistently as the focus for the lesson although some lesson plans did not clarify sufficiently the expectations for the different ability groups.

The pupils' learning generally reflected the quality of teaching. In two lessons all pupils completed the same task with little account taken of the different abilities of the pupils in the class. While different ability groups were well established in most lessons, there was insufficient recognition of the individual learning needs of the pupils in each group. For example, some pupils in a Year 2 class were unchallenged by the work set for their groups.

Teaching assistants provided good support overall and at their most effective they helped the teacher set and maintain high expectations and took responsibility for leading the work of designated groups. Teaching assistants worked with confidence and were directly involved in helping the pupils learn.

There has been outstanding improvement in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the two Year 3/4 classes. The pupils in these classes now enjoy learning and are developing more positive attitudes towards their teachers, peers and the school. While there is still a small but significant number of pupils whose behaviour requires constant and ongoing management, the culture in these classes has changed dramatically. The views of the pupils and parents confirm the positive impact the recent changes have had on the learning environment; changes which have affected the ethos of the whole school. However, the gains made in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are fragile as the very good improvements in these classes have resulted from the implementation of a very different approach to the way the classes are organised. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 are enjoying the changes that have just been put into place; it is too soon to evaluate the longer term impact of this work.

Pupils in all other classes were also very well behaved and were more actively involved in their learning. For example, two boys in a Year 6 class realised that they did not have a partner in their respective groups and moved across the classroom to work together without any direction from the teacher. Another pupil provided additional information in a discussion about the artist Monet.

The pupils' behaviour was consistently good around the school; they offered to open and close gates and waited for each other as they went through doors. The overall attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were very good and created an excellent climate for learning.

The pupils' attendance has improved: it was 94.8 per cent over the last two months. The letters written to the parents of the pupils with less than 95 per cent attendance have had a marked impact on increasing attendance.

The acting headteacher has continued to provide very good leadership and well focused support. For example, he recognised the need for more useable

assessment information to help raise standards. He developed a cycle of assessment and held meetings about standards with all Key Stage 2 staff to discuss the progress and plans for each child in their class. He also analysed National Curriculum test data and is helping subject leaders identify key areas for improvement. However, these developments are at an early stage. All senior staff are fully aware of the need for more information about the pupils' attainment so that they can track the progress of individuals more effectively and instigate more focused teaching and intervention. Further work on this important area is planned for next term.

The acting headteacher worked with the consultant teacher to address the serious concerns about the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the Year 3/4 classes. Effective working links have been set up with a special school and they are scheduled to continue into the next school year because they have helped improve the management of the pupils' behaviour across the school.

Sound preparations have been made for the induction of the new substantive headteacher to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. The acting headteacher is rightly appreciative of the high level of support he has received from the senior team and from the staff who have all worked strenuously to overcome the challenges that the school has faced.

Subject leaders have continued to develop and refine curriculum targets and have begun to collect assessment information through more regular and extensive testing. Several new initiatives have been started and are set to be extended across the school. These include, for mathematics, an effective planning and assessment tracker, new key objective assessment cards and an award scheme written by the subject leader that has been successfully piloted in the Year 3/4 classes. A writing toolkit has been developed and effectively linked to the 'Work of the Week' initiative that celebrates pupils' achievements.

The governing body continues to gain strength and confidence. The budget plan developed by the finance committee has been accepted by the LEA and more governors are directly involved in the life of the school. A new clerk has been appointed and several enquiries have been received from parents about becoming a parent governor. Decisions on new members have been left until the start of the new school year to enable all new parents to be considered. Attendance at governors' meetings has improved.

The LEA has continued to provide good support to the school. The well-judged appointment of the acting headteacher has had a marked, positive impact on the school. Good subject support has also been provided. The LEA has wisely extended the appointment of the consultant teacher to provide much needed continuity for the new programme for the Year 3/4 classes.

## **Action taken to address the key issues**

### **Key Issue 1: raise the pupils' standards of attainment by Year 6 in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and by Year 2 in English**

The provisional results from the National Curriculum tests indicate that some progress have been made particularly at Key Stage 1. Standards in lessons have also shown some improvement. However, areas of weakness remain. Further work is planned on developing effective ways to track the progress of individual pupils' so that underachievement can be quickly identified and appropriate support provided. There have been many positive developments that have the potential to have even greater impact once they are fully established. Progress on this key issue is reasonable.

### **Key Issue 2: eliminate the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and raise the quality of teaching and learning generally**

The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and the quality of teaching has been raised. Further attention is to be given to matching work more closely to the pupils' individual needs, building on the successful development of class and group targets. Progress on this key issue is good.

### **Key Issue 3: improve: the behaviour of the small but significant minority of pupils who cause most disruption to their own and others' learning; the pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on their own and others' learning and behaviour; the provision for the pupils' spiritual development**

Behaviour has improved significantly; however, the development of the pupils' understanding about the impact of their actions on their own and others' learning and behaviour is at an early point. Effective provision for pupils' spiritual development was evident in the assemblies. Progress on this key issue is good although the gains made require considerable consolidation.

### **Key Issue 4: continue to bring to the attention of the LEA the inadequacies of the hall used by the school**

The plans for a new hall have been approved and building work is due to commence within the next three weeks. Progress on this key issue is good. This key issue has been dealt with in full.