

## PROTECT-INSPECTION

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19 March 2009

Mrs Deana Aldred,  
Acting Headteacher  
St John's Church of England Primary School  
Heath Road  
Sandbach  
Cheshire  
CW11 2LE

Dear Mrs Aldred,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Denise Shields, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in January 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Diocese of Chester and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of St John's Church of England Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 17–18 March 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, parents, governors and representatives of the local authority (LA) and the Diocese of Chester.

### Context

Since the last monitoring visit in November 2008 the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have resigned. Two teachers have replaced them; one on a two-term secondment from another school and a newly qualified teacher on a one-term contract.

The governors are in the process of appointing a new class teacher on a permanent contract and a substantive headteacher to take over from the seconded acting headteacher when she leaves at the end of the summer term.

### Achievement and standards

The school's records of pupils' progress and monitoring visits by the LA indicate that pupils in all classes are making good progress, including within the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). Pupils appear to be on track to reach challenging targets. In Year 2, pupils are set to attain the national expectations for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, where checks on pupils' work indicate very good progress is being made, nearly all pupils are set to achieve the national expectations for 11 year-olds in English, mathematics and science with above average proportions of pupils on track to achieve the highest level, Level 5.

The range of progress made by pupils in the lessons observed by inspectors varied between good and inadequate. It was satisfactory overall and varied in line with the quality of the teaching and learning. When teaching and learning were not fully effective, this was usually because the needs of all learners were not adequately met and they did not make the progress in lessons of which they were capable. Support staff were not always as fully involved as they should be.

The school has a number of pupils from Traveller families. They make the same progress as other pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise pupils' achievement, especially in Years 3 to 6 – good

#### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good, although they do not like the many changes of teachers the school has experienced in the past two years and feel their learning suffers when this happens. Pupils think the school is getting better and that they are receiving a better education now than before. Most pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well. Since the last visit a new system for rewarding good behaviour and discouraging inappropriate behaviour has been introduced. This is popular with pupils who are highly motivated to reach their target and achieve an award. However, some parents are concerned that for the younger children, reaching the target and getting a reward now means too much to them, and they become despondent if they do not achieve an award. This concern was passed onto the school.

#### Quality of provision

Building on the key issue around improving the quality of teaching and learning identified in the inspection report of January 2008, one of the priorities set for this monitoring visit was to achieve an overall improvement in the consistency of teaching and learning. Although some progress has been made, inconsistency remains and this aspect of improvement is not fully secure. The range in the quality of teaching and learning observed varied between good and unsatisfactory. It was satisfactory overall. When teaching and learning were less effective this was generally because the learning needs of all the pupils in the class were not fully provided for. Support staff were not always as fully involved in teaching and learning as they should be. From observations, about a half of pupils now benefit from consistently good or better teaching, including outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These pupils enjoy lively and interesting lessons. The many changes of teachers continue to be a major determinant in the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Teachers and pupils need time to get to know each other well and for teachers to thoroughly establish the pupils' learning needs and the teaching strategies that work most effectively.

The issues from the inspection report about the curriculum, assessment and the guidance pupils receive about academic progress have all been dealt with effectively, as reported in previous monitoring letters. The curriculum continues to be developed along lines that make learning more interesting and relevant for pupils and has been enhanced since the last visit by the creation of a new sensory garden, an environmental area and a woodland walk. Pupils know their personal targets for improvement and their work is marked in a way to show the next steps they need to take.



Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment – satisfactory
- Provide a curriculum that better meets the needs of all pupils – good
- Ensure that academic guidance for pupils is effective in helping raise their achievement – good

### Leadership and management

The good work of leaders and managers at all levels has been sustained. Parents continue to express concerns that the recent improvements at the school may falter with the imminent change of headteacher. This is a major concern for them. However, the governors, with the support of the local authority and the diocese, have done all in their power to ensure a smooth progression. The governing body is more effectively structured and more skilled. It has a clear view of what is needed and is currently in the process of appointing a substantive headteacher. It is committed to making a smooth transition from the acting to substantive headteacher.

The acting headteacher continues to have the full confidence of staff, pupils and parents and to lead the school forward. Since the last visit, middle management has been strengthened. Core areas of inclusion and the development of teaching and learning are allocated to senior staff. Support staff continue to play a significant role in the development of the school by taking on responsibility for developing the quality of provision. Four of the five areas for improvement have now been dealt with successfully. However, a consistently effective quality of teaching and learning has not yet been established and this continues to inhibit pupils' progress.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that improvements in the school's provision and in outcomes for pupils are established and sustained – good

### External support

The local authority and the Diocese continue to work together well and provide good support for the school by closely monitoring its progress and providing help to resolve staffing situations when they arise. A strategy to support the school when it is removed from special measures is in place.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning. In particular, ensure teaching meets the needs of all learners.



- Ensure the smooth transition in the leadership of the school when the substantive headteacher is appointed.