

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



3 April 2009

Ms Anne-Marie Saunders  
The Acting Headteacher  
Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School  
Liddymore Road  
Watchet  
Somerset  
TA23 0EX

Dear Ms Saunders

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Following my visit with Joanna Pike, Additional Inspector, to your school on 1 and 2 April 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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 Director of Children's Services for Somerset, the Director of Education of the Diocese of Bath and Wells and the Assistant Education Secretary, Methodist Church Schools.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 April 2009

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the acting headteacher, the chair of governors, senior teaching staff, a school improvement adviser from the local authority, groups of pupils and the parent champion. A telephone conversation was also held with the headteacher who will be seconded to the school from the start of the summer term 2009 until July 2010.

## Context

After a period of sickness, the headteacher resigned in March 2009 and the assistant headteacher took on the role of acting headteacher. Since she is also a teacher for one of the Year 3/4 classes, this has left the school with significant gaps both in teaching and in leadership and management, following a period when the leadership of the school was disrupted as a result of the headteacher's absences through illness.

## Achievement and standards

Standards attained by the oldest pupils remain below those which are expected nationally, as reported at the inspection in November 2008. This is not unexpected since planned strategies for development have barely started as they have been adversely affected by the illness of the headteacher, his subsequent resignation, and the urgent need to address the lack of secure leadership. The school has rightly recognised the importance of improving staff confidence in making accurate assessments of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics, to enable targets to be used more effectively to raise standards. Action is planned to improve the accuracy of assessment next term through staff meetings to agree the standards of samples of pupils' work in mathematics.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage continue to make satisfactory progress from their relatively low starting points and about half reach goals set out nationally for the end of the Reception year. The school's judgements have been moderated recently by the local authority and been found to be accurate. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress as a result of good teaching. Those currently in Year 2 joined the school with levels of knowledge, skill and understanding well below those expected. The school's data indicate that the school is on track to reach standards at the end of the school year which are below average. This however represents good progress from their starting points. The local authority has checked the assessments made in Year 2 and these are also accurate.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:



- improve pupils' standards, particularly in numeracy in Years 3 and 4 – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

This remains a strong aspect of the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and like coming to school. When asked what had improved recently, they said that they had more difficult homework and really liked this challenge. These positive attitudes are apparent in lessons where pupils work hard. They know their writing and mathematics targets, but are not so clear about the small steps they need to make to reach them. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and secure, and are confident that any bullying is addressed well. The school meets current requirements to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep healthy through regular exercise and a balanced diet.

The school council is not yet giving pupils an effective voice in improving the school. Pupils are keen to contribute but feel that the 'helper' system in Year 4 is not well organised. They are disappointed that their peer mentor training has not taken place.

### Quality of provision

Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is improving but is not yet consistently ensuring that pupils make good progress in their learning. Most of the planned actions to improve teaching involved the previous headteacher. As a result of his illness and subsequent resignation, it has not been possible to improve teaching more quickly in order to accelerate the pace of pupils' progress which over time remains unsatisfactory. While pupils behave well and relationships with staff and other pupils are good, the pace in lessons sometimes slows and sessions at the end of lessons are not used effectively enough to refer to learning objectives and to consolidate pupils' learning. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss ideas with a partner but this is not sharply focused and does not always contribute as much as it might to their progress.

Teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage remain satisfactory. All adults are now involved in assessing children's progress and there are now more opportunities for children to initiate their own learning. Neither of these initiatives has had sufficient time to be used regularly in day-to-day practice in order to make a difference to children's progress in their learning. In Years 1 and 2, the strengths in teaching and learning have been maintained. Good resources are used effectively to support well designed sequences of activities which promote good progress. Time is used well and classrooms provide effective environments for learning to which pupils respond positively.

Teaching assistants constitute an underused resource. They are keen to be involved in pupils' learning but during teacher-led sessions they are often not contributing as much as they might. Sometimes they are not available at the start of lessons which hampers their capacity to support pupils. They are at their best when working with



individuals and small groups when they support pupils in their thinking through effective questioning.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4 – inadequate.

### Leadership and management

Progress with this issue has been hampered by the illness, absence and then resignation of the headteacher. Under the guidance of the acting headteacher, the staff drew up a new action plan. This process has been very helpful in giving all staff ownership of the areas for improvement and in exploring and sharing what needs to be done. The plan is not sharply focused enough to help direct efforts where they will have the swiftest and most effective impact. Appropriate tasks are identified, but the timescale and sequence of completing the tasks have not been best matched to the developments required. The plan's arrangements for judging whether tasks have been successfully completed are not always clear enough to help the school evaluate their impact on standards and achievement.

Following the resignation of the headteacher, there is an urgent need to secure strong leadership including clear roles and responsibilities for senior and middle leaders. Currently, temporary arrangements are hampering leaders' best efforts to improve the school. The local authority has secured the services of an experienced headteacher from the start of next term until July 2010. The acting headteacher and other senior leaders have successfully maintained staff morale and secured the existing strengths of the school. Subject leaders have benefited from good, though recent, support from the local authority and are keen to contribute to driving the school forward. Governors fully recognise the issues facing the school and are determined that they should be successfully addressed. At present, securing the leadership of the school in difficult times has taken priority and training for governors has had to be postponed until next term.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve the quality of strategic planning to focus rigorously on rapidly improving pupils' progress – inadequate.

### External support

The local authority has provided good support for the school through changing and difficult circumstances. It had previously identified the school as needing extra support due to the appointment of a teacher new to headship. When the school was judged to require special measures, the local authority acted promptly. A detailed plan for improvement was drawn up setting out how a wide range of local authority staff were going to support the school in addressing its areas for improvement. This plan was overtaken by events since the headteacher, as a former numeracy



consultant, featured prominently in many of the planned actions. His illness and subsequent resignation resulted in a pause in the engagement of local authority consultants with the school. A school improvement adviser provided valuable additional support to the governing body and the local authority acted quickly and effectively to support the governors in this new situation, securing the secondment of an experienced headteacher to the school from the start of the summer term 2009. In the last few weeks, advisory staff have made a number of visits to the school. There is now a need to revise the action plan to take account of the changed situation and to plan to secure the leadership and management of the school for the future.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Secure the leadership and management of the school in the longer term.
- Ensure that the governors, the seconded headteacher and the local authority revise the local authority plan to address the key issues in the light of the new circumstances in which the school finds itself.

