

Serco Inspections
Boundary House
2 Wythall Green Way
Middle Lane
BIRMINGHAM
West Midlands
B47 6LW

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



12 March 2010

Mrs J Naylor
Acting headteacher
The Henry Prince C of E (C) First School
Main Road
Mayfield
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 2LB

Dear Mrs Naylor

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Henry Prince Church of England (C) First School

Following my visit to your school on 10 -11 March 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

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 Lichfield and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of The Henry Prince Church of England First School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 10-11 March 2010

Evidence

The inspector observed lessons, checked pupils' work in books, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, parents, groups of pupils, a governor, the consultant headteacher and a representative of the local authority.

Context

The Key Stage 1 teacher left the school at the end of the autumn term 2009. The governors appointed a replacement teacher for the remainder of the school year. A teaching assistant left the school in February 2010. Due to budgetary constraints, the teaching assistant was not replaced.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Since the last monitoring inspection, the school's tracking information shows that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 has improved and is now broadly average. Although pupils' attainment in mathematics is not as high as reading and writing, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently working at their age related levels. However, although there are signs that pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is higher than at the time of the last monitoring visit, standards remain low, especially in writing and mathematics.

Because of better teaching and the further embedding of new literacy initiatives, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is beginning to accelerate, especially in literacy. In Key Stage 2, although the rate at which pupils make progress is not as great as in Key Stage 1, the school's tracking information shows that it is better than at the time of the last monitoring inspection, especially in reading and writing. This is mainly due to the significant additional support pupils' receive from the acting headteacher and the local authority.

More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and better analysis of the performance of specific groups is helping teachers match work more closely to the needs of most groups of pupils. However, the more able pupils still do not yet make sufficient progress because the work they are given does not yet challenge them well enough.

Regular timetabled handwriting practice is improving pupils' skills in letter formation. The school's tracking information shows that the work undertaken in Key Stages 1 and 2 to improve pupils' basic skills of recognising sounds, words and letters is

having a positive impact on raising pupils' attainment in spelling and reading. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the need for pupils to practise their skills of writing in lessons other than literacy and, consequently, more opportunities are taken.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve standards and achievement in writing across the school by: improving the teaching of letter formation, sounds and words; ensuring that pupils apply their writing skills across all subjects; and informing pupils about what they need to do to reach their targets - satisfactory.
- Accelerate the rates of progress of all pupils and ensure they are consistent across the school by analysing the performance of specific groups so that teaching can address their needs - satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and feel confident to ask teachers for help if needed. Observations during the inspection showed that most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. However, when the activities lack challenge or the pace of learning is too slow, some pupils lose concentration and, very occasionally, disrupt the learning of others.

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues to improve. Regular observations of the children and more rigorous recording of children's progress help the teacher and nursery nurse plan activities which are increasingly well-matched to children's capabilities. Over recent months the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 has improved. The teacher's expectations are higher and the work given to most pupils is more challenging. However, the quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 class remains fragile. Although improvements to teaching have been made since the last monitoring inspection, teachers are still not clear enough about what they want pupils to learn in lessons and do not plan carefully enough the small steps which help ensure effective learning. Consequently, too many lessons are focused on the pupils' activities rather than their learning and pupils are not given accurate feedback on how to improve their work. Some marking of pupils' work provides pupils with helpful guidance on how to improve. However, this is still inconsistent.

Overall, the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work has improved and is helping teachers match work more closely to pupils' capabilities. The system to track pupils' progress is now much more embedded and the school is better placed to identify underperformance of individuals and groups. Consequently, pupils who need additional support are now identified earlier and helped more quickly. Although all

classes display pupils' targets for some aspects of literacy and numeracy, not enough guidance is given in lessons to help pupils achieve them.

The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to improve. The format for pupils' individual education plans has been revised to give pupils a greater understanding of how the plans will help them make better progress. The school's records show the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure teachers use assessment information to match their teaching to pupils' abilities and give feedback that helps pupils know what they have to do to improve - satisfactory.
- Improve the management, support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities - satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Systems for school self-evaluation have continued to be embedded. Greater rigour in tracking pupils' progress has helped the acting headteacher increase her knowledge of the priorities for improvement. Many of the initiatives instigated in the autumn term are steadily having a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement, especially in literacy. Meetings between the acting headteacher and each member of staff are increasing teachers' awareness of their accountability for pupils' progress. However, the meetings are not as effective as they could be because specific targets for pupils' achievement are not discussed and recorded. Governors have received training from the local authority and are now more knowledgeable about how to evaluate the pupils' progress and more aware of their responsibility to hold the school's leadership to account for all aspects the school's work. The governor interviewed during the monitoring inspection stated that the acting headteacher provides governors with all the information they need to judge the impact of the school's work.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Establish a clear direction for the school and ensure that the actions taken by school leaders are effective in improving pupils' achievement – satisfactory.
- Make sure that governors hold the school to account for the standards it achieves and the rates of pupils' progress by providing them with the information needed to make decisions and judge the impact of the school's work – satisfactory.

External support

The support provided by the local authority has been central to all improvements. The acting headteacher, governors and teachers have received very helpful guidance. The school improvement adviser, subject advisers and consultant headteacher have been regular visitors, working with staff and acting headteacher to instigate new initiatives, support teaching and provide advice and training where needed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn in lessons and plan carefully the small steps which help ensure effective learning.