

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



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Mr S Stubbs
Hallow CofE Primary School
Main Road
Hallow
Worcester
Worcestershire
WR2 6LD

Dear Mr Stubbs

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Could you also thank the staff who I observed teaching and the pupils with whom I met?

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 May 2007, the school was asked to improve pupils' achievement, the effectiveness of teaching and the use of assessment in meeting the full range of learners' needs. It was also asked to provide more opportunities for problem solving and calculation and set work at a more demanding level to raise standards in mathematics.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The clear commitment for improvement by staff and the determined focus by the headteacher have brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching is securely good across Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Reception and Key Stage 1. This has also meant an improvement in the standards and achievement of pupils.

Results in 2007 show that standards at Key Stage 1 have risen to above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in mathematics show a significant rise from below average in 2006 to above average this year and reflect improved

provision for pupils' calculation skills. Reading has also improved significantly and writing continues its upward trend.

Results in Key Stage 2 tests show that standards are broadly average and roughly comparable with results from the previous year. However, these pupils had significantly lower results when they were assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 and this shows good progress from their starting points, particularly over the last year. School records show that pupils now make generally good progress and these are used to set challenging targets for individuals and for the school.

The school has received good support from the local authority (LA). This has been particularly successful in improving the quality of mathematics teaching and enhancing the use of assessment. Pupils are challenged by their work which is well matched to their levels of ability. The recently introduced assessing pupil performance (APP) initiative has been successful in focusing staff on using assessments well to inform pupils where they are and how to improve. The implementation has been so successful that staff from the school have been identified as good practitioners and will work with the LA to demonstrate this to other schools. This is a very clear indication on the progress made by the school. Pupils say they find the new assessment system, which clearly identifies areas for them to improve, very helpful. However, at times, insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to consolidate their work after being given advice.

Greater use is made of investigations within mathematics and activities often incorporate areas of using and applying, which have worked well to improve the problem solving skills of pupils. The increased emphasis on teaching mental strategies has improved pupils' calculation skills. Pupils also commented that the standard of behaviour has improved within the school because lessons are more interesting and teaching has got better. They particularly like the greater emphasis on rewards for good behaviour and work. Pupils also say they like the way in which teachers use personal experiences within lessons and this makes them feel that the staff have a better understanding of them and makes them enjoy school more.

Subject leadership has been enhanced by working closely with LA consultants. However, leaders now need opportunities to become independent of the LA and take greater responsibility themselves for monitoring the work in their areas and ensuring improvements are fully embedded.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector