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Mrs Glynis Yates
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Yates

Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints Church of England (A) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 to 26 September 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2018.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education

for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2018

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure systems for recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns enable staff to share information about pupils in a consistent and timely manner
 - ensuring that robust systems are in place to inform leaders' evaluation of the school's performance
 - rigorously evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to check that it meets the needs and abilities of all pupils
 - regularly checking the progress pupils are making from their starting points
 - using the newly introduced assessment system to identify where pupils are not doing as well as they should and developing provision to help them to catch up quickly
 - providing a curriculum that enables pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects
 - governors holding leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress and the quality of education
 - governors seeking ways to provide the headteacher with additional leadership capacity to help her to secure improvements.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and ensure that all pupils make good progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers receive accurate feedback on their practice in order to improve their teaching
 - raising teachers' expectations of the progress pupils can make and the standards they should achieve
 - making sure teachers plan learning activities that meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and aptitudes in mixed-age classes
 - equipping teachers with the skills necessary to assess pupils' learning accurately
 - assessing pupils' learning in lessons in order to modify teaching to meet pupils' needs, to improve their work and so that errors are not repeated
 - questioning pupils to deepen their understanding of what they are learning
 - developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills across a range of

subjects

- ensuring that lower ability pupils are given sufficient opportunities to work on their own and develop their independence
- ensuring that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged and achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 25 September 2018 to 26 September 2018

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, other school staff and four members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector spoke with several parents and took account of the 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, submitted this term.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has returned from maternity leave. No other staff have joined or left the school. The executive headteacher is due to retire at the end of this term. Governors have appointed a successor to take up the post in January. At the time of the previous inspection, children in Reception Year were taught separately from older pupils. These children are now taught, in the mornings, alongside some pupils from Year 1.

Following the judgement that the school requires special measures, the Secretary of State issued the school with a directive academy order. This instructs the school to become a sponsored academy. This process has been delayed because a suitable sponsor has not been found.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The section 5 inspection identified two areas for improvement. The school has made little progress in addressing either of these. Leaders and teachers are working hard, but their efforts are not effective. In large part, this is because leaders still have an overly positive view of the quality of education. This has led to complacency. As a result, leaders' actions lack the sense of urgency required to bring about essential improvement.

The school's action plan is weak. It is not targeted towards addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection report. Leaders have set out the actions they will take to improve the quality of teaching. However, leaders are unclear about the actual difference they intend each action to make. The plan reflects this shortcoming. Leaders have not considered how they will check that the planned actions are being carried out, or how they will measure whether the actions are having the desired impact. Consequently, improvement is ad hoc, where it is happening at all. There is change in some elements of teaching, but leaders cannot determine whether it was what they intended, or whether it is happening quickly enough.

Leaders' view of the quality of education is too positive because their self-evaluation is based on superficial and unreliable evidence. For example, leaders' approach to checking the quality of teaching does not build a picture of what teaching is typically like. Leaders give teachers considerable notice of the date and time when they intend to observe lessons. They also tell teachers what they will be checking. As a result, teachers are able to tailor the lesson to show leaders what they want to see. Evidence of pupils' learning over time shows that leaders' perception of 'high' quality observed in these sessions is not replicated consistently.

Leaders have provided training to help teachers teach writing and mathematics more effectively. However, these actions have not made a big enough difference. This is because the training was too general. Leaders have not addressed the actual weaknesses in teaching noted at the previous inspection. Consequently, the failings persist, and the quality of teaching remains ineffective.

Teachers do not have a realistic view of how they need to improve. This is because leaders do not give accurate feedback to teachers on their practice. Leaders share general messages with teachers about what they have seen during lesson observations or through scrutiny of pupils' books. These messages convey too heavily the positive features. Leaders do not identify what is not working well enough. Consequently, teachers are unaware of how much more there is to do to improve the quality of their teaching. Therefore, while teachers are willing and hard-working, the weaknesses remain.

Leaders are beginning to use the information generated by the school's assessment system to check pupils' progress more closely. However, leaders do not use this information to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, the system is not helping leaders to rectify underachievement.

Following the section 5 inspection, leaders modified the timetable to provide more time for teaching some subjects. A programme of training is under way to build teachers' knowledge of how to teach some aspects of the curriculum more effectively. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress across a wider range of subjects. For example, pupils' books show that they carry out more experiments in science. In doing so, they are learning to hypothesise, measure and record scientifically, and to draw conclusions and evaluate their findings.

At the previous inspection, the inspector found that some concerns about pupils' well-being had been noted by teachers but not recorded formally. No pupil had been placed at risk by this, but the inspector recommended that all concerns should be reported according to the school's policy. The procedure is now followed meticulously.

Governors say that they have accepted the judgement that the school requires special measures. They are taking positive steps towards becoming effective. For example, they have begun to implement the recommendations from the recent

review of governance. Some members of the body bring relevant knowledge about school improvement. Governors are beginning to challenge leaders. They no longer accept everything without question. However, governors do not hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions. As a result, governance remains ineffective. It has not made a difference to the quality of education provided by the school. For example, governors accurately identified that the school's action plan was weak. They agreed a strategy with leaders to improve the plan. However, governors have not carried their idea through to completion. As a result, the plan remains flawed and the school is not improving.

Governors have tried to add capacity to leadership. To this end, the assistant headteacher now has more time away from teaching her class. However, this has not led to sufficient improvement in the quality of education. Governors have appointed a new executive headteacher from January. She will be responsible for running this school and one other. This is a risk. For this school to achieve rapid and sustainable improvement, those leading it will need to have knowledge of how to achieve the substantial turnaround that is necessary, demonstrate the skills needed to make it happen quickly, and be able to devote enough time to successfully implement the changes that are required.

Parents are concerned about the quality of leadership and management of the school. Fewer than half of those who completed the Parent View survey during the inspection feel that the school is well led and managed. Parents are frustrated at the current situation. Some lack confidence in the ability, and to some extent the will, of the governing body to take the actions needed. Parents appreciate the hard work of their children's teachers. They are grateful that teachers have ensured that, despite the weak quality of education, the school continues to be a happy place where their children feel safe and valued.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers work hard and are committed to improving their practice. They have tried to act on the advice they have received to date. However, the scope of the training has been too broad. As a result, the weaknesses in teaching identified at the previous inspection continue to hamper pupils' progress. Therefore, while the quality of teaching has improved in some ways, it remains ineffective overall.

Teachers are trying to make work more challenging. Their planning now takes greater account of what is appropriate for pupils' ages. However, teachers do not use what they know about pupils' prior knowledge to ensure that they set appropriately challenging tasks. In all classes, there are examples of work that is too easy for many pupils and too hard for some.

Teachers make sure that lessons include activities that are designed to challenge the most able pupils in particular. This is meeting with mixed success. One reason for this is that teachers do not know well enough what their pupils are capable of.

Often, teachers underestimate what pupils can already do. Consequently, they provide work that is too easy.

Similarly, in lessons, teachers do not act upon pupils' cues that they need harder work. In several instances during this inspection, pupils showed that they already understood what they were supposed to be learning. This happened in all classes in key stages 1 and 2. In each case, the teacher either did not notice that the pupil could already do the work or did not modify the pupil's task in the light of this realisation. Over time, such instances are limiting the progress these pupils make.

Teachers' questioning is improving. Teachers are more skilled at asking questions that test out pupils' knowledge. For example, questions often prompt pupils to explain how they reached an answer to a mathematical problem or to justify why they chose to write a sentence in a particular way. Teachers are less confident in using questions to deepen pupils' understanding beyond what is already known. When pupils struggle to explain their thinking, because they have bits of knowledge missing, teachers tend to move on to a new line of questioning, rather than unpick the pupil's misunderstanding.

Pupils' books show that teachers now pay greater attention to developing reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Teachers expect pupils to write equally well in all subjects, not just in English. However, pupils' work still contains too many basic errors to be of good quality.

Lower ability pupils benefit from the support they receive to complete their work. However, when they do not have an adult's help, many flounder. They remain too reliant on support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils are confident, happy learners. They rise well to a challenge when it is presented. They are, on the whole, very tolerant of the ineffective teaching they receive. Some find sensible ways of occupying themselves when the work is too easy, such as by reading a book. A few show their boredom by fidgeting or doodling on their work. This is an indication that they are not being taught well, rather than a reflection of their attitude to learning.

The school site is very small. Pupils cope well with moving around in such a restricted space. For example, they are sensible and considerate towards each other when lining up or passing each other between classrooms.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes for pupils have been in decline for a long time. Year on year, pupils have not reached their potential. This means that the pupils who have been in the school longest have fallen furthest behind where they should be. Recent, slight,

improvements in the quality of teaching have slowed the downward trend. Pupils' progress has increased a little. However, it is not nearly enough to make up for the years of underachievement.

On the surface, the 2018 key stage 2 national assessment results appear strong. However, too few pupils achieved the higher standards in the assessments, given their capabilities. These pupils made little progress between the beginning of Year 3 and the end of Year 5. They made some progress in Year 6, but not enough to compensate for the failings of the past. The school's assessment information portrays a similar story for all other year groups. In spite of recent improvements to their progress, underachievement continues, because they are not catching up to where they should be.

External support

Leaders have sourced support from a variety of external providers. Some has made a positive difference to pupils. For example, the training in teaching writing is beginning to lead to better outcomes for pupils. Their writing is now closer to being of an appropriate quality, given their ages and aptitudes. More recently, teachers have received support to improve their teaching of mathematics. This has increased their confidence and is beginning to lead to more effective planning of mathematics lessons.

The local authority's statement of action was judged by Ofsted to meet minimum requirements when it was initially submitted. However, the plan would have benefited from the addition of further detail. It did not set out the precise actions the local authority would take to support the school to improve. In addition, it did not set out how the local authority would continue to support improvement if the school had not become an academy by the anticipated date of January 2019. At the time of this monitoring inspection, no suitable sponsor has been identified. It is highly unlikely that the school will become an academy by the planned date. Consequently, the statement of action will soon become obsolete. The local authority has agreed that it will continue to monitor the school's improvement until a sponsor is found. A further statement should be written to set out how and when this will happen.

Three reviews of the school's effectiveness have been carried out since the previous inspection. One was led by the local authority, and the other two by leaders from an outstanding school. These reviews did not focus leaders' attention closely enough on the areas for improvement in the section 5 inspection report. Leaders believe this is a factor in their over-generous view of the progress the school has made since being judged to require special measures.