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Mrs J Gorecka  
Headteacher  
St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking  
Ranmore Road  
Dorking  
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Dear Mrs Gorecka

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking**

Following my visit with Gavin Jones, additional inspector, to your school on 30 and 31 May 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. 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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey County Council.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of leaders at all levels in monitoring the work of the school so that there is a shared understanding of what needs improving and how improvement can be achieved
  - making sharper use of the information from the monitoring of lessons to identify key development points for teachers and to set and follow up clear actions for improvement
  - sharpening the use of data so that underachievement is identified and tackled more quickly.
  
- Improve teaching in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics by:
  - raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that they pitch work at the right level for all pupils
  - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they are clear about the next steps in learning
  - ensuring that all staff have good subject knowledge.
  
- Improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that planning identifies clearly how skills are to be developed systematically and differing needs are to be met
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write and use literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects
  - ensuring that lessons always do enough to engage pupils fully in their learning.

## **Special measures: monitoring of St Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Dorking**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 30 and 31 May 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work books. They met with the headteacher and other staff, a group of pupils, a small group of parents, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

There have been significant changes in the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection. The federation with St John's Church of England Community School and Nursery has been dissolved and the headteacher relinquished the role of executive headteacher of both schools in April. She has returned full time to St Martin's. The head of school has returned to her former role as deputy headteacher. The wider leadership structure has been reviewed and the two members of staff holding the posts of lower and upper Key Stage 2 leaders left the school at the end of May. The responsibility of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been extended to include Key Stage 1. This additional role started at the beginning of May. A new teacher joined the school in Year 4 in February.

The school has been partnered with an outstanding local school whose headteacher, a National Leader of Education, is providing support for school leaders and teachers.

The school suffered considerable disruption in February and March due to an asbestos-related emergency. This led to the loss of educational resources and pupils' workbooks as well as the temporary closure of classrooms in Years 3 and 4. The school's computer suite was also affected and this facility was out of use until the middle of May.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Most pupils made at least satisfactory progress in the lessons observed across Key Stage 2 during the inspection. However, there were a few lessons where learning and progress were inadequate. This was sometimes because the work given to pupils was too difficult and sometimes because the task set was too simple and did not build on their prior learning. The school's checks on progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across Key Stage 1 indicate it remains good. In Key Stage 2, pupils in some classes are still not making expected progress over time. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, who were most affected by the asbestos emergency and staff changes, have made least progress. School data indicate that pupils in Year 5 have made particularly good progress in reading. Work in pupils' books indicates there is

variable progress across Key Stage 2 and between subjects. In some classes, lower attaining pupils, in particular, are not making sufficient progress in writing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are divided into ability groupings for mathematics lessons. The school's checks on progress indicate that this system works best for higher-attaining pupils.

Senior leaders have set up regular meetings with teachers to discuss each pupil's achievement and these have raised expectations about the amount of progress that pupils should make. Early indications are that these meetings will enable underachievement to be spotted quickly. Teachers are beginning to work with 'focus groups' of pupils in lessons to target support and address gaps in knowledge and understanding. However, this practice has only been introduced recently and is not consistent in all classes. There has not been enough time for this to have an impact on raising standards.

### **The quality of teaching**

The local authority has provided tailored support for individual teachers and some staff have had the opportunity to observe outstanding practice at the partner school. Most have risen to the challenge to improve their practice and are now able to provide more effectively taught lessons. However, it is clear that, at present, the improvement in the quality of teaching is not yet consistent enough to secure accelerated progress for pupils over time. School leaders still do not make sufficient use of progress information when considering judgements on the quality of teaching in each class. They do not triangulate outcomes of monitoring in lessons with other monitoring activities, such as planning and work scrutiny, so that they have a complete view of teachers' competencies. Teachers do not have sufficient understanding of the link between the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make over time.

In the most effective lessons seen, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, time was used well and pupils made good progress based on carefully planned activities. Teachers skilfully balanced whole-class teaching and group work. Teaching assistants were used very well to work alongside pupils and mirror the teacher's work. This helped those requiring additional support to make similar progress to their peers. This is not the normal pattern however, particularly in Key Stage 2, and less effective teaching does not enable all pupils to make good progress in the lesson. Teachers ensured that pupils understood what they were learning, but the learning was disjointed because lessons were not structured carefully enough. Teachers tended to move around the room supervising pupils rather than targeting their support for particular groups. In the very few inadequate lessons, teaching lacked clarity and expectations of what pupils could achieve were inappropriate. Learning was compromised because too many pupils could not complete the task. Good intentions to make the lesson fun for the pupils were unfulfilled because the activities were not pitched at the right level.

Work in pupils' English books in Key Stage 2 shows that all pupils are often given the same task to complete regardless of their needs. This indicates that teachers are not

yet using assessment information consistently to adapt activities to pupils' needs. Work to develop teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is on going.

Marking of pupils' work shows improvement since the last inspection. Most teachers are applying the school's marking policy and all work is marked. 'Even better if' comments give guidance on what pupils need to do to improve, but there are too many instances when the same comment is repeated in books, showing that the pupil needs further help from the teacher to be able to overcome weaknesses.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- improve teaching in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics – inadequate.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in and around the school remains at the levels judged at the last inspection. The pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Some pupils lose concentration and begin to chat in those lessons where the work set by the teacher is not well matched to their needs. This affects their progress in lessons. Teachers are consistent in the way that they manage behaviour and pupils respond well when the teacher asks for their attention. Overall attendance is above average for most groups of pupils. The school tracks attendance patterns carefully and takes action if there are any concerns. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure and pupils say they feel safe in school.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

It took time for the federation to be dissolved and the headteacher only returned to the school full time in April. Consequently, the pace of change and improvement was initially too slow. Senior leaders acknowledge that they did not formulate the plans for a new leadership structure and the realignment of posts of responsibility quickly enough. Nevertheless, there has been greater urgency in recent weeks and matters have progressed resulting in several senior staff leaving the school this week. Two posts of responsibility will remain unfilled until September and these will be covered by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. A new senior leadership team will begin work in September. The headteacher fully understands the need to make up lost ground and appreciates that the school still faces considerable challenges.

The capacity of middle leaders to make a full contribution to the school's improvement remains limited, due mainly to inexperience. Middle leaders are beginning to be involved in checking teachers' planning and pupils' work, and will have on-going support to develop their leadership skills.

All teachers have received training to improve their practice and develop subject knowledge. Some have had tailored support from local authority consultants. The headteacher has taken steps to reduce the amount of inadequate teaching seen at the last inspection. She visits lessons regularly, but does not make enough use of

other monitoring information to ensure that teachers understand exactly what aspect of their practice they need to improve.

Members of the governing body have not yet been able to fully develop their role in challenging and holding the school to account because they do not currently receive enough information about patterns of pupils' progress during the year. School leaders do not analyse data effectively or present reports in a way that enables governors to see clearly how much progress pupils are making each term. Governors have carried out a self-evaluation exercise and have formulated a monitoring plan. They have attended a review meeting with the local authority.

The school acknowledges that work to improve the curriculum has not been a priority. A new planning format has recently been introduced, but some teachers are not yet confident in using it. Teachers have used the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to plan some work for pupils that enables them to use their literacy and numeracy skills in real-life contexts. For example, pupils in Year 4 were calculating the cost of a street party. However, there is little evidence of a coordinated approach to planning opportunities for pupils to use their skills in different subjects and, because activities do not meet pupils' differing needs, lessons still do not do enough to engage pupils sufficiently in their learning.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the area for improvement:

- strengthen leadership and management – inadequate
- improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 – inadequate.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action fully meets requirements. Support to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been well directed on what the school needs. It has been well received by staff at the school, but it is too early to see significant impact on the quality of teaching. The local authority's review of the school's effectiveness and progress in addressing areas for improvement at the end of April provided school leaders with valuable advice and guidance on next steps.

Staff are beginning to benefit from working with the partner school. This has provided opportunities for teachers to visit another school to see good practice and is starting to help them to develop their subject knowledge.