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29 April 2013

Miss Helen Dennison  
Headteacher  
All Saints Church of England Primary School Marple  
Brickbridge Road  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK6 7BQ

Dear Miss Dennison

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to All Saints Church of England Primary School, Marple, Stockport**

Following my visit to your school on 26 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with yourself, senior leaders and managers, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Minutes from governing body meetings and the school's monitoring records were considered. We also visited each classroom to meet pupils and staff.

**Context**

The acting headteacher at the time of the February inspection has been appointed as the permanent headteacher. Considerable staff changes are due to take place in time for the new academic year. Two teachers will be leaving the school at the end of the school year and two teachers will return from extended leave. The governing body are in the process of recruiting new staff, including a new assistant headteacher.

## **Main findings**

You have successfully seized the findings from the recent inspection to refocus the work of the school. Your clear steer and high ambition mean there is an honest acceptance of the school's weaknesses and clear plans in place to lead the school to success. Consequently, the school is brimming with enthusiasm and excitement as reinvigorated staff and governors are all pulling in the same direction to become a good school.

Much has already been accomplished and a solid foundation for further improvement is firmly in place. This is because you have rightly put teaching at the heart of everything, so that time is not wasted dealing with less important issues. The system to manage teachers' performance has been updated so expectations have been raised. Staff have greater opportunities to update their teaching skills because meetings have been reorganised to concentrate on staff training and links with other schools are being exploited to share expertise. You are bringing staff with you on the improvement journey by including them in decisions on new ways of working and ensuring they receive precise feedback on their performance. Your evidence shows checks on teaching are frequent and thorough. Strengths are celebrated but teachers are left in no doubt about what they need to do to improve. Strategies to support teachers to improve are matched well to individual targets and clear plans are in place for those teachers who need extra help to improve their teaching.

Senior leaders are helping you to drive forward change effectively. New guidance for writing is helping teachers to pitch their teaching more accurately and build on what pupils can do already. A new handwriting policy is being followed in all classrooms because senior leaders are relentlessly checking and involving parents in the drive for higher standards of presentation. The fruit of this work is evident in the lively and vibrant classrooms which indicate pupils' increasing pride in their work. Pupils' achievement looks set to improve this year, although there is more to do to help more able pupils make swifter progress.

The school improvement plan sets a clear route to improvement. The actions are matched well to the school's key priorities. The plan reflects your desire to bring about change urgently and the evidence provided shows you have been successful in sticking to a demanding timeframe. Nonetheless, greater thought needs to be given to the actions you will take from September to maintain the momentum of improvement. The plan shows your ambitious long term goals for teaching but there is not enough detail about the difference all of this work will make to improving pupils' achievement over time.

The biggest potential barrier to you not reaching your goals is the changes in staff for the new academic year. However, you and the governing body are grasping these changes as a huge opportunity to restructure roles and responsibilities, refresh teaching practice and bring in new expertise. While the potential threat posed by such a high turnover of staff cannot be ignored, you are taking every step to minimise any risks through tight recruitment procedures which involve the governing body, a well-planned induction programme and a coaching system to help bring new and returning staff up to speed with the All Saints' way of working. Nonetheless, establishing a permanent teaching force is essential if you are to maintain momentum and reach your long term goals.

You have the full support and confidence of the governing body who are keen to raise their own game to make sure they keep pace with improvements across the rest of the school. The expertise of new governors is being effectively harnessed to help all governors gain an even better understanding of school data. Governors have already looked at their own strengths and weaknesses which they plan to use to draw up their own action plan. Governors recognise the need to improve their monitoring role. To this end they have established an additional committee with responsibility for keeping an eye on the school's progress. Nonetheless, there is scope for them to sharpen the way they collect their own evidence so they have a more rounded view on how well the school is performing.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- review the school development plan so there is greater detail about the actions you will take to continue the improvement journey from September and give greater consideration to the long term goals for pupils' achievement
- strengthen the opportunities for governors to monitor the performance of the school.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The support provided by the local authority prior to the recent inspection stood the school in good stead. This means you have been able to hit the ground running and take immediate action to bring about improvement. You are continuing to receive this effective support while you are on the journey to becoming a good school. A local authority officer has helped you sharpen your skills in checking teaching through joint lesson observations, while whole-school training is helping teachers to see what they need to do to become good or outstanding. The local authority is supporting governors with the appointment of key staff to ensure the right people are in place. The officer's useful reports are providing governors with an independent view of the school so they can offer well informed challenge and support. The Diocese has assisted with the appointment of the headteacher.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Stockport and the Director of Chester Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**