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Mrs Jane Quinn  
Acting headteacher  
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary  
Middleton Road  
Oswestry  
SY11 2LF

Dear Mrs Quinn

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England Primary**

Following my visit to your school on 22 May 2013, 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 which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection. Please pass on my thanks to everyone who came to speak to me.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the coordinator of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and a representative of the local authority. I toured the school with you and visited every classroom. I examined the local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan.

### **Context**

The previous headteacher left the school at the end of April. You are now acting as headteacher until a permanent replacement is recruited. You have the support of a

Local Leader of Education and a leadership consultant for the equivalent of one day a week. From the beginning of June, an experienced headteacher will work alongside you for two days a week. Four classes are currently taught by teachers on temporary appointments. One of these teachers is due to leave at the end of this week.

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

It is clear that you have acted with determination to begin to tackle many of the weaknesses highlighted at the inspection in February. For example, the policy for managing pupils' behaviour has been revised and a new system of rewards and sanctions has been implemented. When walking around the school, I could see that classrooms were calm and orderly and on the whole pupils were getting on with their work, although in some cases lacking in enthusiasm. You have carried out observations of teaching and learning in classrooms, and have begun to make clear to teachers what is expected of them and to insist on whole-school approaches to planning lessons and marking pupils' work. You have given some tough messages. It was clear from my brief visits to classrooms that not all of the teachers have fully understood some of what you have taught them, for example, about how to explain to pupils how they will know that they have been successful. It is also clear that some teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to do are still too low.

You have also taken steps to try to deepen teachers' understanding of what pupils should be achieving, especially in Key Stage 2, by sharing examples of work in pupils' books from different year groups across the school.

You have worked to put together the plan of action. The plan has strengths; it covers all of the areas of weakness, and the steps to be taken to deal with them are suitable and show a sense of urgency. This is appropriate, given the scale of some of the weaknesses that have to be tackled and the challenging targets that have been set, for example, for the quality of teaching. You have helpfully identified key questions for senior leaders to ask when assessing the impact of actions. You know that the plan is not yet finalised and that further amendments are needed. In particular, some of the timings need to be specified and success criteria require further work. Some of the success criteria are checks that action has been taken rather than measures of impact; there are too few that are quantifiable and related to improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. This needs to be put right quickly.

At the moment, you are leading the school almost on your own, because the leadership skills of other members of staff are underdeveloped. Although members of the senior leadership team are paid for their additional responsibilities, they have

not in the past been required to fulfil the role of leaders. This means that they lack experience and expertise in driving improvement. This weakness in the next tier of leadership needs to be tackled urgently. The appointment of an additional headteacher for two days a week will help ease the situation, but will not be enough unless other members of the senior leadership team quickly begin to play a much stronger part and take greater responsibility for improvement in the areas that they oversee. The lack of leadership capacity in the senior team is a potential barrier to rapid progress. The local authority's statement of action sets out clearly what is expected of all senior leaders; they need to step up to the mark.

The governing body's role in supporting and challenging the school's leaders is developing well. It has set up a monitoring group to check on the progress the school is making in dealing with areas of weakness. The work of this group is being carefully organised to make sure that governors visit the school regularly but with a clear purpose, and that they record and report their findings. The governing body is undertaking an audit of its skills and experience, and training will be provided subsequently. It is working closely with the local authority over the recruitment of a permanent headteacher. The members of the governing body who spoke to me had a clear understanding of the range and nature of the school's problems and the need for them to be tackled decisively.

The local authority is providing the school with a good deal of effective support and guidance, both at leadership level and for classroom teachers. The statement of action is detailed and sets out clearly what will be done by local authority personnel, working with school staff. There are clear ways in which the local authority can judge the success of its actions.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Shropshire and the Diocese of Lichfield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill

**Her Majesty's Inspector**