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8 July 2013

Miss Pam Keen  
Headteacher  
Priory CofE Primary School  
Jubilee Road  
Trentham  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST4 8EF

Dear Miss Keen

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Priory CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 July 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.

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

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and the new senior leadership team; the headteacher from your local partner school; the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor; and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. I checked the single central record and accompanied you on short visits to all classes.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has altered. You have appointed two assistant headteachers and two other senior leaders. One senior leader and two members of staff are leaving at the end of term. The local authority has formalised your supportive partnership with St Mark's Church of England Primary School.

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

You and the senior leadership team have a realistic view of the extent to which the school needs to improve. You are acting purposefully upon the advice of your local authority adviser and the headteacher from your local partner school to make the necessary changes. You have taken appropriate actions to establish accurate assessment data for reading, writing and mathematics across the school. This is being used to set suitable targets for all pupils. Your partner school is providing practical guidance to help you to establish a more effective system to track pupils' achievement. This will help senior leaders to keep a close check of pupils' progress.

You have responded to the weaknesses in teaching identified at the last inspection. All teachers now have individual improvement plans. Some teachers are working more closely with teachers at St Mark's to improve their teaching. Your monitoring file shows that some improvements have been made to the quality of teaching. However, these improvements have not been rapid enough. The local authority's first target, to eradicate inadequate teaching by July 2013, has not been met. Your existing systems for checking on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement are too complicated, and do not provide a secure view of strengths and weaknesses.

New systems for recording and reporting any incidents of poor behaviour have been introduced. These are being used well by staff. Any incidents reported have been responded to appropriately by school leaders and monitored effectively. The behaviour surveys, involving parents and pupils, have been analysed carefully. You have used this information relevantly to introduce resources into lessons that aid pupils' moral and social development. Your records show that this has had a positive impact on pupils' awareness and behaviour. Peer mediators and the new pupils' group, *The Rights Respecting Squad*, have quickly become an established part of the school routines. A small team of staff has been established to lead this work and ensure consistency. The local authority regularly evaluates the impact of this work.

Governance has not improved. Members of the governing body do not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Governors do not have a system for checking on improvements. Minutes of meetings indicate that discussions are not focused clearly on what the school needs to do to ensure that pupils can achieve more. It is unacceptable that an external review of governance has not yet taken place as recommended in the inspection of April 2013. Urgent action is now required to determine the capacity of the governing body to support and challenge the school.

The local authority is bringing the statement of action and the school's improvement plan together into one single document. However, this work has not been treated with enough urgency. As a consequence action to improve the school's performance is not concerted. Regular visits are made by the local authority adviser to monitor the impact of actions taken and provide further support and challenge through partnership arrangements with St Mark's Church of England Primary School. This has helped to establish roles and responsibilities of the new leadership team.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose. There are some strengths. It is clearly organised around the areas for improvement in the section 5 report. Each section includes success criteria and how it will be monitored and evaluated. However, the targets for the progress that pupils will make over time are too general. They are not aspirational and therefore would not accelerate pupils' progress to make up for previous underachievement. Additionally, the actions identified to improve governance are not sufficient.

The school's action plan is not fit for purpose. It is detailed in most sections and concentrates on the main areas that require improvement. It has milestones for each action. However, it lacks precise, measurable targets so that it is hard to check how well progress is being made in tackling the deep-seated weaknesses in pupils' achievement and quality of teaching.

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-On-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**