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19<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Jane Quinn  
Acting Headteacher  
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School  
Middleton Road  
Oswestry  
SY11 2LF

Dear Mrs Quinn

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

Following my visit with Kerin Jones, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9–10 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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, the Diocese of Lichfield and the Director of Children's Services for Shropshire.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2013**

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should attain
  - making sure teachers use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons which meet the individual needs of all pupils so that they make good progress
  - making sure teachers provide clear guidance to children working independently in the Early Years Foundation Stage about what they are learning and what they need to do to succeed
  - ensuring the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage is used more effectively to promote children's learning.
  
- Make sure leaders and managers are effective in driving improvement by:
  - having clear and up-to-date plans to tackle weaknesses rigorously and thoroughly checking that teachers consistently enable pupils to make good progress
  - making sure that subject leaders provide the necessary training that improves teachers' skills
  - providing more opportunities that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of older pupils
  - providing governors with the accurate information they need so that they can check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching to see how quickly the school is improving.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour by making sure that teachers plan work that interests and holds the attention of the whole class.
  
- Improve governance by:
  - raising the awareness of members of the governing body of the importance of holding the school's leaders to account
  - increasing governors' knowledge and understanding of their roles so that they can carry them out effectively.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School**

### **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9–10 October 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, reviewed documents and met with the acting headteacher and the co-headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing body and five other members of the governors' monitoring group, a group of pupils, the headteacher designate and a representative of the local authority.

#### **Context**

Several staff left the school at the end of the summer term, including one member of the senior leadership team. Another senior leader has stepped down and is to leave the school at the end of this term. The acting headteacher has continued to lead the school with the support of an experienced headteacher who works at Holy Trinity for two days each week.

The governing body has appointed a headteacher who will take up post in January 2014. Discussions about the school's future have begun, including on possible conversion to sponsored academy status, but as yet no decisions have been made.

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

Teachers' assessments and the unvalidated results of national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 show some improvement on the previous year's results. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 in reading and writing increased and was close to last year's national average. The proportions of pupils reaching Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in mathematics increased considerably, but were still below last year's averages. More pupils made the progress that is expected nationally across Years 3 to 6. The proportion who did so was close to the national proportion in writing, but below it in reading and mathematics. Despite the improvements, pupils did not make as much overall progress across Key Stage 2 as is expected of them.

The teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 present a mixed picture. Fewer pupils reached a secure Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics than the proportion seen nationally in 2012. Few attained higher levels except in writing, where the proportion of boys exceeding expected levels was much greater than the 2012 national proportion. This was not mirrored in their attainment

in reading, however. The work in some of these boys' current books does not confirm the assessments made at the end of Year 2.

Outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage were very positive. The proportion of children who attained a good level of development was substantially higher than the local authority's average. However, there was a wide gap in attainment between children known to be eligible for free school meals and those that are not. Current observations of the same children, who are now pupils in Year 1, do not suggest that they are a particularly able year group. The school's results call into question the accuracy of teachers' assessments at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The school's leaders have not analysed pupils' outcomes in any detail, so they have limited information about the performance of different groups in any key stage. A new system for tracking attainment and progress is being established. The headteachers are rightly not confident that the data being entered are accurate, because teachers' abilities to match pieces of work to specific levels are not secure. The tracking system currently shows widely differing rates of progress across year groups and between subjects, and shows that too many pupils are not making the progress that they should be.

There is a big job to do to make sure that pupils currently in Year 6 reach the levels they should, given their starting points in Year 3. The school's targets for accelerating pupils' progress have not been met.

In the majority of the lessons observed pupils made good progress, building on what they already knew and deepening their understanding. This was typically because the work was better matched to their learning needs and the teacher had adapted tasks and activities to suit the range of abilities within the class. This is an improvement. However, there are still too many lessons where good learning does not happen. Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable when the teacher is not clear about what exactly they are to learn in each lesson, or gives them little to do when they have finished each activity. In addition, teachers' questions are sometimes superficial and do not challenge pupils to think or explain their ideas. This means that pupils' understanding is not deepened.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is not improving at a fast enough rate. The amount of good teaching is increasing and inadequate teaching is reducing, but teaching is still not good enough to make sure that all pupils' progress accelerates and they make up for past underachievement. Although almost all teachers have shown that they can regularly teach good lessons when they are observed, the impact of good teaching is not being seen in the assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stages

1 and 2. Not all teachers teach consistently good lessons, and their performance sometimes dips.

Teachers have had training in the setting of objectives for learning in lessons, but weaknesses remain. Objectives are sometimes not specific to individual lessons and are too general, or could apply to a pupil in any year group; 'learning to solve problems' is an example. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers sometimes use the 'development matters' age-related statements as objectives. This is not helpful as they are broad and not specific to the activities children are being asked to do. The focus in teachers' planning and in lessons is sometimes more on what the pupils and the teacher will do, rather than what will be learned. Sometimes teachers plan appropriate tasks but then interrupt the pupils too often, rather than letting them become absorbed in their work. Teachers also use strategies and techniques they have learned without fully understanding whether they are suitable for the situation. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide points for improvement as well as acknowledgement of effort. There is insufficient evidence in pupils' books so far to confirm that this is leading to better learning.

Leaders regularly observe teachers in the classroom, and give feedback and points for development. The teachers themselves say they are keen to move on and to develop their practice. However, the advice given and the opportunities provided for improving their skills are not leading to securely embedded improvements in teaching, and consequently in pupils' progress. It was evident during this inspection that many teachers were acutely worried about their own teaching and how it would be viewed. This is positive in some ways, in that it shows teachers want to do well. However, it also shows that the school is a long way from establishing a culture of professional dialogue between teachers, learning from one another and reflecting on their own practice in order to promote good learning. Morale is fragile.

Good steps have been taken to improve the outdoor environment and what is planned for the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outdoor areas are inviting and well used. Ways of planning and of assessing children's progress have been changed following input from the local authority's adviser. It is too early to assess the impact on children's learning and progress.

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

Pupils' behaviour has improved. Pupils confirmed this in discussion and said that the teachers deal quickly with any misbehaviour. Overall, the pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Playtimes are lively and pupils play happily together. Lunchtimes are orderly and sociable. Effective steps have been taken to manage the more challenging behaviour of a very small group of pupils, so that it does not interfere with the learning of others. Exclusions have risen this term, as a result of clearer boundaries being set. This has been matched with strategies for helping the pupils to remain in school so that their own learning is not adversely affected.

Some pupils rely quite heavily on additional adults for support in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn and usually concentrate on their tasks, but where teaching is weaker they lose interest and do not persevere.

Attendance figures are broadly in line with the national average. The school staff work closely with the education welfare service to deal with children and families where attendance falls below 85%. This has led to some reduction in the numbers who are absent too often.

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

The acting headteacher and the co-headteacher have worked well to deal with the many changes in staffing and responsibilities, and have begun to get to grips with the range of tasks that need to be done. They are under no illusions that the school is not where it should be. This is mainly because leadership at other levels is not strong enough. Other senior and subject leaders know that in the past they did not fulfil their roles. They are now learning how to lead in their areas of responsibility, but this process is taking too long. There is a long way to go before the senior leadership team becomes the driving force for improvement that it should be. Their understanding and ownership of assessment data are limited, and their capacity to diagnose areas of weakness in teaching and learning and determine the next steps is underdeveloped.

The acting headteacher's evaluation of how far the school has come is honest and realistic. A revised action plan has been drawn up and focuses on the most important areas of weakness. The targets in the action plan are not mirrored in the new tracking system, however, which needs amendment in order to reflect the expectation that pupils will make progress at a good rate.

The school's performance is under close scrutiny, quite rightly, by the headteachers, the governing body and local authority personnel. However, it is clear that their monitoring activities are not resulting in sufficient improvement. In addition, the boundaries between the roles of the different parties are not explicit. The governing body's monitoring group takes its role very seriously and undertakes a range of activities to check on progress. However, governors need to be mindful of two things. First, they should not observe lessons and give feedback on teaching; this is for the senior leaders and local authority staff to do, particularly to avoid the risk of mixed messages. Second, they need to be careful that they are not increasing the burden on the school's leaders and staff by monitoring too frequently. Governors' visits are not always linked to specific items in the action plan. There is no clear line of sight that runs from the action plan to checks that action has been taken and the subsequent evaluation of their impact.

It is also clear that relationships between the governing body and the local authority are not as positive as they should be. This must be resolved. All parties must work closely together to determine the next steps to accelerate the school's progress, so that special measures can be removed within the two-year timescale.

### **External support**

The local authority's advisers and consultants have provided a good deal of support for the school, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and mathematics, and in evaluating progress. The impact is evident in the improvements in the environment and the way the Nursery and Reception classes are organised, and in the greater understanding that teachers have about what is expected in mathematics. However, the actions of the local authority have not had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching overall.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- The co-headteachers, headteacher designate, local authority and governors must work together to establish a clear protocol for monitoring the impact of the action plan and the school's progress. The plan should set out what will be done, for what reason, when and by whom. The plan should make clear to teachers when classroom observations will take place and for what purpose.
- The school must take urgent steps to strengthen teachers' ability to make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment in all key stages.