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22 November 2013

Helen Morris  
St Alban's Church of England Primary School  
St Albans Close  
Ashmore Park  
Wolverhampton  
WV11 2PF

Dear Mrs Morris

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Alban's Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit with Jenny Edginton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21-22 November 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 which were 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 making reasonable 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, and the diocese and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - providing training and modelling of good or better teaching so that teachers have high expectations and are clear about what needs to be improved
  - developing the support programme already in place in partnership with the local teaching school
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information and a range of checks on pupils' progress to plan work that matches pupils' different abilities and challenges them to do better
  - developing teachers' skills in providing both oral and written feedback to pupils so that pupils know how to improve their work and can improve their understanding.
  
- Raise attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that checks on pupils' progress are accurate and that teachers and leaders at all levels know exactly how much progress each pupil has made
  - making sure that teachers regularly check that the work set for more-able pupils is hard enough so helping them to achieve the higher levels
  - making sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are provided with the necessary support and resources
  - improving the way in which activities are planned and presented in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the rate at which children make progress is accelerated
  - making sure the school gathers information on those pupils who are educated off site so that they know how much progress these pupils are making.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety across the school by:
  - making sure pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet
  - making sure pupils are fully engaged in their learning and so do not lose concentration and become distracted in lessons.
  
- Improve leadership and management to at least good by:
  - making sure that all staff are fully trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures, and that all records are completed fully
  - enabling all leaders and managers to monitor the impact of teaching and learning more effectively and make rapid adjustments where necessary
  - implementing effective performance management procedures so that all staff are held to account and provided with opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge
  - making sure that the current good monitoring, challenge and support provided by the governing body is maintained
  - providing appropriate resources and more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 20-21 November 2013**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the headteachers of St Alban's and St Thomas's Church of England Primary Schools, Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) from Manor Primary School, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in May 2013, a head of school has been appointed. A teacher resigned in August 2013 and another teacher has tendered her resignation to take effect from 31 December 2013. Three temporary staff have been appointed to cover for the vacancies until replacements can be found. St Thomas's Church of England Primary School, with which St Alban's is federated, and Manor Primary School, a local teaching school, continue to provide effective support to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

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

The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening test in 2013 was below the national average. Girls did not perform as well as boys. However, of those pupils identified as having special educational needs and in receipt of support, a higher proportion than nationally achieved the expected standard.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 remained below that of all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. None of the pupils in Year 2 attained the higher level in mathematics. Those pupils identified as having special educational needs and on School Action Plus made comparable, if not better, progress than similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remained below the national average in all subjects and were significantly below in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in Year 6 was significantly below the national average in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mathematics. Unvalidated performance data indicate that the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, was not met.

Pupils' underachievement is prevalent across all phases and not confined to particular groups of pupils. Pupils fail to make expected progress from their starting points because over time, there has been insufficient challenge for all pupils

regardless of their abilities, needs, gender or background. Many pupils show evidence of significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have not sufficiently focused their teaching on regular and relentless practice of the basic skills associated with writing, reading and mathematics. Too many pupils spell and punctuate incorrectly and simple mathematical processes are not understood.

Leaders receive regular reports regarding the progress made by a pupil attending alternative provision. On-going communication and liaison is provided by an educational psychologist who works with pupils on both sites.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching remains inadequate overall because pupils make insufficient progress in lessons and over time. Following the section 5 inspection, teachers were too slow to take on the necessary improvements introduced in the training and support provided. All teachers are aware that ongoing support will be provided but rapid improvements are expected. They know that leaders will use the full powers available to them through performance management if teachers fail to develop their skills appropriately.

The SLEs from Manor Primary School have provided regular training events focusing directly on improving the quality of teaching. Two teachers who originally received training have now resigned. However, two teachers in upper Key Stage 2 have successfully adopted SLEs' strategies, and improvements are evident in lessons and pupils' work. During lesson observations, they precisely identified the learning purpose of the lesson; prepared interesting and relevant resources; consolidated pupils' understanding through their questioning; and planned tasks of varying complexity to meet the pupils' needs. These teachers quickly identified and corrected pupils' misconceptions and pupils were clear about expectations of them. Pupils were able to evaluate accurately their own work and that of their peers; correctly assess whether or not their learning objectives were met; and demonstrate good progress in their learning.

There is still much to do to ensure that the curriculum is covered appropriately and that pupils' progress is accelerated through the levels. Teachers' assessments of pupils are not consistently accurate and as a consequence, lessons are not always planned precisely enough to meet pupils' different needs. Leaders have introduced systems to track pupils' rates of progress to inform their analysis and enable planned intervention at the earliest opportunity.

Those pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs have been identified and appropriate support is provided to ensure their progress. Daily booster classes have been introduced for Years 5 and 6 pupils to ensure their speedy progress towards nationally expected levels of attainment.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

When lessons are well planned and the tasks provide appropriate challenge, pupils show genuine interest in their work. They listen with concentration and respond to questions using well-chosen, subject specific vocabulary. They work cooperatively and show they are able to take the lead when required. In the main, behaviour is well managed by adults during lessons. In lessons where teachers expected too little, the pupils became quickly bored, restless and distracted.

Leaders have developed and displayed an easy to follow, comprehensive, behaviour policy which clearly sets out the behaviours expected of pupils. Whole school expectations, rewards and sanctions are commonly understood. In discussions with pupils, they confirmed that they felt safe at school. The pupils were clear about what to do if they felt threatened. They accept that some problems occur from time to time but they were confident that the problems would be dealt with. Exclusions are rare and not used lightly. Parents are fully aware of the process and pupils' reintroduction to school is carefully monitored.

At lunchtime three Year 6 pupils were in attendance to help younger children. Their commitment to the smooth running of mealtime procedures was impressive. They were very sensible and suitably aware of their responsibilities. In the playground older pupils were seen freely offering help and assistance to younger pupils. Training has been provided for both staff and pupils regarding the safe use of the internet. A comprehensive policy has been written and staff, pupils and parents were involved in its implementation.

Attendance is closely monitored and continues to improve.

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

Leaders have worked exceptionally hard to introduce and consolidate procedures and policies in response to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. A head of school was appointed in September 2013. The executive headteacher divided leadership responsibilities between herself, the head of school at St Alban's and the head of school at St Thomas's. Together they have successfully built the necessary leadership expertise to drive the school forward. All three are aware of the speed and urgency with which improvements must be achieved given the very low baseline in February 2013. Partnerships with St Thomas's and Manor Primary, a neighbouring training school, have made available the necessary expertise to support staff at St Alban's. Significant changes to staffing continue to interrupt their joint endeavours but together, they demonstrate both resilience and determination.

New teachers joining the school on 4th November were supported by recently introduced policies which set out clearly the school's non-negotiable expectations regarding their performance. All staff, including seconded teachers, have received

accredited training in child protection and safeguarding procedures. All suitable checks and records are completed as required. Six members of staff hold up-to-date first aid certificates.

Leaders and subject managers have introduced a programme of weekly monitoring where lessons are observed and feedback is provided. SLEs also observe teaching and indicate clearly where improvements are needed. All development points are followed up within short timescales.

The governing body has created new committees to monitor the school's progress. The executive headteacher presents monthly reports for the relevant committees. While these reports provide an account for initiatives taken and policies introduced they do not sufficiently explain the impact of such actions. In the absence of this information, governors are not fully able to evaluate the school's success in its journey towards the removal of special measures.

Priorities have been agreed, expertise identified and support for all staff provided. New resources have been purchased to improve each classroom and add to the necessary resources to support pupils' learning. Those pupils requiring support have been identified and where necessary, external agencies have been identified to assist.

### **External support**

The local authority representatives regularly monitor the school's progress against the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Monitoring activities include lesson observations, feedback to teachers, examinations of pupils' work and attendance at meetings with the headteachers and governors. Local authority evaluations are clear and objective. Officers' knowledge of the school, its successes and difficulties, are good.