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11 February 2014

Mrs Felicity Djerehe  
St Andrew's (Barnsbury) Church of England Primary School  
Matilda Street  
London  
N1 0LB

Dear Mrs Djerehe,

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Andrew's (Barnsbury) Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. In advance of my visit, I was made aware of a qualifying complaint made about the school to Ofsted. I did not investigate the complaint itself, but I did look at wider issues related to aspects of the school's management.

Senior leaders are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- undertake a review of provision in the foundation subjects with a view to providing, from September 2014, rigorous emphasis on subject skills and knowledge alongside a continued promotion of higher standards of writing.

Governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- commission and carry out, as quickly as possible, a thorough and independent review of governance to include scrutiny of all governing body structures, accountabilities, policies and processes.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, three middle leaders, the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, and representatives from the local authority and the London Diocesan Schools' Board. I also met with a group of Year 6 pupils. I was accompanied by you and the deputy headteacher in visits to classrooms where we observed teaching and learning, and looked at pupils' books. I also scrutinised a number of governing body policy documents and other school records.

## **Context**

You joined the school in September 2013, following the previous headteacher's departure to take up a post in another school. At the same time, new teachers were appointed to the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. A number of governors completed their term of office and new members joined the governing body during the Autumn term.

## **Main findings**

Everyone I spoke to – staff, pupils, governors, and representatives from the local authority and diocese – told me that your arrival has made a positive impact on the school. I agree. You have introduced new and more robust systems for monitoring the day-to-day running of the school, including those relating to behaviour and the recording of incidents when they occur. You show a good, honest understanding of the issues to be overcome in order for the school to be judged 'good' overall. These include the need for consistently higher standards and good teaching in all classes. On our visits to classrooms, both you and the deputy headteacher correctly identified the good and the weaker practice. There is no doubt that, when teaching is good, pupils shine and make good progress. A memorable example was in the Reception class. The children sang songs and did actions together to help them gain a good understanding of subtraction; they then moved quickly into groups where the teacher and teaching assistants guided them in a variety of enjoyable practical tasks to reinforce their learning. The most able and those with special educational needs were equally well catered for and included. However, you rightly recognise that in other classes teaching is not as enjoyable or responsive to pupils' individual situations. You also recognise that, alongside plans to raise achievement in English and mathematics, the wider curriculum needs to have a stronger focus on the quality of pupils' subject skills and knowledge learning. This is essential if pupils are to make good progress in all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Your vision is manifest in the Rapid Improvement Partnership Plan, which has been written collaboratively with staff, the local authority, the diocesan board, and with governors. This plan is appropriate, has clear lines of responsibility and shows

milestones for when improvements are expected to be achieved. It is helpful that the plan has also been shared with parents.

Members of the governing body appreciate the openness and honesty that you have brought to meetings. They say that you, the local authority and the diocesan board have helped them gain a more accurate understanding of the school's performance. It is positive that governors have accepted the inspection judgements and show determination to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and achievement. However, it is also most regrettable that the recommended independent review of governance has not taken place. A number of strategic policies, some of which are statutory obligations for the governing body, have not been attended to as they should. It is essential this situation is rectified as soon as possible, with support from the local authority and diocesan board.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Since the last inspection, the local authority and diocesan board have provided increased support for the school. This includes through rapid improvement planning and management, and through coaching for teachers. Comparison of external reviews of teaching with my own observations suggests that the support given by external advisers to teachers is informed by an accurate and perceptive knowledge.

Although the local authority and diocesan board have been helpful in appointing additional governors with relevant expertise, they have not been insistent enough in promoting an external review of governance. Nor have they been thorough enough in checking that appropriate strategies and policies are in place and of good quality.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Islington and the Director of the London Diocesan Schools' Board.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**