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19 March 2014

Mrs Kim Werth
The Headteacher
Charlton Church of England Primary School
Barton Road
Dover
Kent
CT16 2LX

Dear Mrs Werth

Special measures monitoring inspection of Charlton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 19 March 2014, 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 October 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, and a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans, and read a range of other documents related to school improvement. Together, we visited all classrooms to observe learning and looked at the quality of teachers' marking. We toured the playgrounds and site perimeter to inspect improvements to safety and security.

Context

Since the inspection, four members of staff have resigned. One new appointment has been made, one teacher has returned to teaching following a long absence, and two teachers job share. An experienced, temporary teacher has been appointed in Year 3 until the end of the summer term. Several governors have left the governing

body. A new Vice Chair has been appointed and a small team of governors has joined together as a 'strategy team' to monitor the school's improvement.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

There has been significant and rapid improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has grasped the key issues facing the school with alacrity and relish. She is leading improvement highly effectively, because she is keenly focused on the right priorities and because she has communicated a clear vision for the school's improvement to all staff, pupils and parents. She is ably supported by the Chair of the Governing Body and members of the governor strategy team, who share her determination that all pupils will achieve well and thrive. Much stronger systems for managing the performance of staff ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them. Teachers are held more firmly to account for pupils' achievement; some have left as a result.

The review of governance has been highly successful because governors have used it to identify their training needs, develop their roles and evaluate their impact on school improvement. They make excellent use of the advice and guidance of an experienced consultant and use her time well as a coach and as a model of good governance. They are much more searching in their analysis of pupils' achievement than in the past. Minutes of their meetings and notes of their visits to lessons confirm this. Records of meetings with parents show that governors and the headteacher are communicating openly and honestly with parents about what needs to be done to improve the school quickly.

Achievement is showing some signs of improvement. The headteacher models effectively for other leaders how to identify where pupils are falling behind and help them catch up quickly. She has, for example, conducted a thorough analysis of the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. School improvement plans show that she is responsible for most improvement activity and evaluation of its impact. It will be important for other senior leaders to demonstrate their increasing contribution at the next monitoring visit.

The local authority statement of action sets out clear expectations for higher achievement, better teaching and strong leadership. It communicates a sense of urgency by setting a very short timescale for the majority of actions, especially, and quite rightly, those related to children's safety. It is not always clear enough in specifying how changes will affect how pupils learn, but school improvement plans do more of this, so that the two complement each other well. Local authority officers recognise that the plan in its current format fulfils its purpose, but needs further development to show how medium- and longer-term actions will sustain improvement.

New gates have been installed to ensure that the site is secure during the day and that children cannot wander into any unsafe areas. Staff training in child protection and safeguarding is up to date and meets the accreditation requirements of the local authority safeguarding board. Governors maintain the safety of the site with routine health and safety checks. The diocese has committed funding for a new entrance which will further enhance security and site access.

The school improvement consultant and the headteacher work together well. They jointly evaluate teaching and take a wisely cautious approach. They are not content to say that it is good, unless improvements are embedded, sustained and leading to good achievement for all pupils. Senior school improvement advisers from the local authority and the diocese attend regular meetings to evaluate the school's progress. Consequently, both organisations are much better informed about the quality of education provided by the school than in the past.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

- The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.
- The school improvement plans are 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 Kent and the Diocese of Canterbury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside
Her Majesty's Inspector