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28 March 2014

Mr Luke Atkinson
Acting Headteacher
Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Peasmarsh
Rye
TN31 6UW

Dear Mr Atkinson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 December 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher, governors and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. Short visits were made to each of the classes at work.

Context

Since the inspection, the former deputy headteacher has moved to a new post. The headteacher is away from the school on medical grounds. The Rye Academy Trust currently provides the executive headteacher and acting headteacher.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The special measures outcome of the inspection did not come as a surprise. Since then, clear and well-considered actions have been taken to bring improvement by the new leaders. Their positive leadership has gained the trust and respect of staff, governors and parents and carers. Information on pupils' progress showing how well pupils are progressing in English and mathematics is much better organised and shows some recent improvement in the progress made by many. The school improvement plan is very carefully designed; it is well linked to the local authority's action plan and the inspection recommendations. The objectives and tasks within it are expedient and well timed. In some cases, the wording in the plan could be sharper so that the success of initiatives can be measured more precisely. Class and school timetables have been swiftly reorganised. These ensure that all pupils enjoy the full range of subjects and have time to review their work and progress towards their personal targets. Pupil premium funding is appropriately spent.

Teaching staff now each have specific, allocated responsibilities for leading reading, writing, mathematics and science across the school. This is a positive step, and beginning to develop. It is important, too, that all the other subjects should be well led. Staff are keen to develop their practice. To this end, useful links have been made with some other local schools to share ideas and experience. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are also usefully compared with other schools. Teachers find the observations made by senior staff of their lessons useful in helping them to improve. Their marking of pupils' work shows improvement. Pupils also helpfully mark their own and each other's work.

The school has the loveliest facilities, indoors and outdoors. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and encouraging. For example, members of staff actively lead pupils' play at lunchtimes. Classrooms are colourful, exciting and inviting for pupils. Many other areas such as the library, music room and school hall are superb. The outdoor learning area for the youngest pupils is of sufficient size, but not well organised. During this inspection visit, it was not in use, or set up, to provide the necessary range of learning opportunities for pupils. This has also been commented upon by the local authority.

There is huge potential in the school; it could be a truly exciting and magical place for pupils to learn and grow, but presently the expectations of staff are not always high enough, and not just in developing the pupils' technical skills in numeracy and literacy, very important though these areas are. It is important for pupils' learning to have greater breadth and depth. For example, two older pupils were using the internet to research dance, including ballet. They found out that *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* were written by Tchaikovsky. However, at this point a member of staff speaking with the pupils moved them on too quickly, so the pupils did not find out more about the composer and his ballet music, even though they were interested to

find out more. A real opportunity for deeper learning was missed; this would have been useful in its own right and could have made the pupils' subsequent written work much better informed.

The governing body is well led and continues to be clear about the school's present circumstances and needs. Governors ask pertinent and challenging questions of senior leaders. They found the recent local authority commissioned review of their work very useful. In particular, they recognise the importance of ensuring that their evaluations and visits to the school are closely linked to the objectives in the school improvement plan. Governors, working with the diocese and local authority, have an important and difficult task in identifying the best way ahead for the school's medium- and long-term future, in terms of the possibility of becoming an academy and partnerships with other schools. They recognise rightly that it will be helpful to decide upon the direction as quickly as reasonably possible.

The local authority provides useful and proactive support. It brokered the current leadership arrangements. It provides suitable support to governors and senior staff. For example, it organised the review of governance and its key adviser helpfully supports the senior staff with work scrutiny and lesson observation.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is 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 East Sussex and the Diocese of Chichester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector