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4 April 2014

Alison Hatch  
Headteacher  
Cranbrook Church of England Primary School  
Carriers Road  
Cranbrook  
Kent  
TN17 3JZ

Dear Ms Hatch

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Cranbrook Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 April 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 November 2013.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher and headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. Short visits were made to all classes and the inspector spoke to a small group of pupils from Years 1, 4 and 6.

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher is absent from the school. Between January and March, four different headteachers led the school for varying periods of time. At the beginning of March a part-time interim executive headteacher and a full-time interim headteacher were appointed to lead the school until the end of July 2014.

Since the last inspection three teachers have left the school. A Year 2 teacher with responsibility for the leadership of mathematics has been appointed until July 2014. A part-time Year 1 teacher with responsibility for the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has been seconded from another school until July 2014. A supply teacher is teaching the Reception class.

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

After a period of considerable turbulence in terms of leadership and staffing, the interim executive headteacher and interim headteacher have provided a strong sense of direction and purpose to the school. They have acted swiftly to ensure that essential policies are in place. They have clearly communicated their high expectations for the progress pupils will make. Senior leaders have written a short-term plan that focuses on moving forward quickly on the areas identified at the last inspection.

While the local authority's statement of action does identify appropriate areas for improvement, the plan does not extend beyond July 2014. This is not enough time for the school to make the improvements that are needed. The local authority has arranged the valuable support of West Malling Academy, a national teaching school, where the interim executive headteacher holds his substantive post. Teachers and leaders have worked effectively alongside colleagues from this school to develop their planning and teaching practice. The local authority adviser has given useful support to develop planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils say that the school is improving. They say that the work they are asked to complete is more challenging. Pupils say that behaviour is improving because poor behaviour is dealt with more consistently and effectively by teachers.

A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed six weeks ago. Governors are developing a better understanding of assessment information and as a result they are asking more challenging questions of senior leaders about the school's progress. Members of the governing body make more frequent visits to the school. These focus on key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and this is improving the governors' understanding of the school's work.

The longer-term arrangements for the staffing and leadership of the school beyond July 2014 are not yet secured.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The action 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 Kent and the Diocese of Canterbury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

**Her Majesty's Inspector**