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Julie Ball  
Headteacher  
St John the Baptist CofE (Controlled) Primary School  
Church Street  
Ruyton XI Towns  
Shrewsbury  
SY4 1LA

Dear Mrs Ball

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St John the Baptist CofE (Controlled) Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 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 February 2014.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior staff, six members of the governing body including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with a Local Leader of Education (LLE) who is providing leadership support to the school. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. Other documents were examined including: records relating to checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children; minutes of governing body meetings; examples of teachers' individual action plans; records of checks on the quality of teaching; notes of visits made by local authority officers; and information about pupils' achievement. In addition, short visits were made to classrooms to talk to pupils and look at their work.

## **Context**

A new office co-ordinator has joined the school since the previous inspection. One teacher is currently off sick and one teacher is leaving the school at the end of this term.

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

You, your staff and the governing body have responded to the inspection judgement with a sense of urgency. There is a desire at all levels of leadership to make rapid, sustainable improvement.

Your immediate priority for improvement was, rightly, to strengthen systems for ensuring pupils are safe and secure. You, the governing body and the local authority have worked quickly to overhaul the school's processes for ensuring all safeguarding requirements are met. There is now a thorough, systematic approach to checking the identities of all adults and their suitability to work with children and, where needed, that staff are appropriately qualified. Omissions found in the previous inspection have been rectified and mechanisms are now in place to prevent future recurrence of these issues.

You and governors have thoroughly analysed the reasons why the school was judged to require special measures and produced a well-focused plan to address each area for improvement. The plan indicates helpful measures by which you will judge if improvement is happening. There are a few instances where these measures are not clearly distinguished from the activities planned for monitoring improvement. This leads to some lack of clarity about who is responsible for implementing improvement and who is responsible for checking that improvement is rapid enough. Nevertheless, while it could be sharpened, the plan is fit for purpose.

You regularly check the quality of teaching and now have a better understanding of its effectiveness, because you are using a wider range of evidence to inform your judgements. For example, to judge how well teachers teach over time, you now use information provided by the new system for tracking pupils' progress along with work in pupils' books. You have increased the minimum expectation of the progress pupils should make and made it clear that many pupils will need to make even more rapid progress to achieve well.

You have implemented a tailored programme of training for individual teachers' needs through personal action plans. These plans show precisely what improvement you expect from each teacher and indicate what support will be given. For example, teachers have observed lessons in other schools where teaching is good or

outstanding. Your records indicate that teachers are responding positively to advice and support. As a result, the quality of teaching in most classes is improving and pupils are making better progress. Where the training has not led to sufficient improvement, you have taken appropriate action.

The subject leader for English has introduced a new approach to marking pupils' work. You and she have been checking to see if this is helping pupils rectify errors and make more rapid progress. You have, rightly, identified that the impact on pupils' progress is currently limited and so you are pursuing a more effective system.

An external review of governance, recommended at the time of the previous inspection, has been completed. The governing body welcomed the process as an opportunity to strengthen how it carries out statutory responsibilities. As a result, systems for keeping pupils safe are now rigorous. A monitoring group of governors meets frequently to check the implementation of the action plan. Governors have been trained to use pupils' achievement information to challenge you effectively about the performance of different groups and are now better informed about the quality of teaching. Governors ask you challenging questions but this is sometimes informally and so no record is made. This means governors do not systematically follow up whether issues have been adequately addressed.

Following the previous inspection, the local authority prepared a statement of action. This sets out how the school will be supported to improve and challenged to demonstrate it is happening quickly enough. You and the governing body say you are well supported by the local authority. The school improvement adviser has helped teachers to better match work to pupils' abilities and supported the governing body to use achievement data to challenge you more effectively, and has helped other senior leaders to improve their understanding of how to monitor the quality of teaching. In addition he attends meetings of the governors' monitoring group to support them in accurately evaluating the rate of improvement.

You welcome the support given by the Local Leader in Education for improving the quality of teaching and for building the capacity of leaders at all levels. Teachers from her school have worked alongside your staff to ensure assessments made of what pupils can do are accurate. This joint working has made a positive contribution to the emerging improvements in the quality of teaching.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The previous inspection report states that the school should be allowed to appoint newly qualified teachers. Evidence from this inspection confirms that this judgement continues to be appropriate.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Shropshire and the Diocese of Lichfield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**