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Mrs M Buller
The Headteacher
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Washington Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5AA

Dear Mrs Buller

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Theresa Phillips, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 21 and 22 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of

State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Reading and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the skills to accurately assess pupils' attainment
 - raising expectations about what all pupils, particularly those who are more able, can achieve and set tasks appropriate for their needs
 - ensuring the pace of learning in all lessons is appropriate to ensure good progress for all pupils
 - ensuring that teaching, together with additional support, enables those with special educational need to make good progress.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum
 - ensuring the writing policy is consistently applied in all classes.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, to secure and sustain improvements by ensuring that:
 - procedures relating to safeguarding are urgently, consistently implemented
 - there is clear succession planning for the senior leadership of the school
 - weaknesses in teaching are eliminated rapidly, performance management is linked to achievement and checks made on the quality of teaching are robust
 - staff are given opportunities to develop their skills through a planned programme of professional development
 - rapid action is taken to monitor the progress of those who are eligible for the pupil premium to ensure that gaps are closing
 - the leadership of special educational needs is developed within the school
 - the governing body robustly holds the school to account and ensures financial probity.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 October 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the English and mathematics subject leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and three other members of the IEB, and a representative from the local authority. Her Majesty's Inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local diocesan board.

Context

At the end of the summer term the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher and four teachers left the school. Since the previous monitoring visit, the IEB has restructured the support staff team. As a result, five teaching assistants have left and two members of the office staff team have also left the school. The caretaker and one lunchtime supervisor left during the summer. The new executive headteacher took up her post in September. There is a bursar who is supporting the school part time from another local school. A caretaker took up post in October and there are a number of teaching assistants who are now supporting pupils with special educational needs. There are now three members of the senior leadership team, the executive headteacher and the two assistant headteachers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Results at the end of Key Stage 2 in the last academic year show that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in reading and writing was above the national average. All Year 6 boys achieved Level 4 in writing, but the percentage of girls achieving Level 4 in writing was below the national average for girls. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 was below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. It was particularly low in writing.

At the end of Year 2, although the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average, the proportion reaching the higher level in writing was well below the national average. In addition, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonic (the sounds letters make) screening check was well below the national average for Year 1 pupils.

Although children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age, the proportion that reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception year was below the national average.

Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional government funds for pupils in receipt of free school meals and those in local authority care) continue to achieve less well than other pupils. The gap in their achievement compared to other pupils is not closing rapidly enough.

Currently the progress pupils make, as seen in lessons and in their work, shows that progress is variable across the school and for different groups of pupils. Teachers are providing opportunities for pupils to write at length, but some literacy skills are not being used well enough in other subjects. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting require improvement, particularly in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is not improving quickly enough to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress. There is effective teaching in upper Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6. As a result, pupils are making more rapid progress in lessons and over time. But this is not the case across the school, particularly for the most able. Teachers are not identifying clearly enough what they expect pupils to learn, they focus too much on the activity rather than the learning that they expect to take place. In some lessons, teachers are not providing sufficient challenge for the most able pupils to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. They are not using the information they know about pupils' starting points to plan lessons to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress.

Teachers are mainly assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately. This is an improvement. But some teachers still have a tendency to give a more generous assessment of pupils' work. This means that the work that is planned does not meet pupils' learning needs well enough. This is particularly the case for some pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.

The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is now much more consistent. Most teachers are providing useful feedback to pupils to help them to know what they need to do to improve their work. However, not all teachers are providing pupils with sufficient time to respond to the marking comments, and some comments do not help pupils to know how to show improvements in their work.

Targets for writing and mathematics are clearly evident in pupils' books. Pupils know where to find their targets, but do not always know what they need to do to achieve them. In the best examples, teachers plan lessons with objectives for learning that support pupils to achieve their targets. Their marking comments are used well to enable pupils to show how their targets can be achieved.

Some teachers lack the subject knowledge required to enable pupils to fully understand the subject they are learning. This was evident during the inspection in

some English, mathematics and science lessons. As a result, pupils are unsure about key features of these subjects and misconceptions occur.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are positive about the recent improvements in behaviour. They understand the new behaviour policy and like the 'Golden Rules'. Pupils say that this helps them to take responsibility for their behaviour. They try hard to achieve successfully their goals. The behaviour observed during the inspection in lessons and around the school shows that most pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and show kindness and respect for those around them. In some lessons, where the tasks are not planned well enough to match pupils' learning needs, some off task behaviour is evident and pupils lose concentration. This interrupts their learning and the learning of others.

There are incidents where pupils display challenging behaviour. The school has good systems in place to manage demanding behaviour. External support has been used effectively to manage these pupils and to find solutions to enable them to access learning.

Pupils say that bullying is rare, but if it does occur it is dealt with well. They understand about many forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe when using new technologies and the internet.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that, if they have a problem, there is always an adult on hand to help them. They enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their above average attendance rates.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The newly appointed executive headteacher has quickly identified the most important aspects of the school's work that require significant improvement. The school improvement plan is being redrafted. At present it is not linked closely enough to the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. The plan needs to set out clearly measurable milestones relating to expected gains in pupils' achievement in order to drive rapid improvement and demonstrate where improvement is achieved.

The performance of teaching staff is being monitored. However, weak teaching is yet to be eliminated. Too much teaching requires improvement. Senior leaders need to gather a wide range of evidence to support their evaluation of the quality of teaching. The cycle of checks on the quality of teaching needs to be robust in order to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make. Where areas for improvement are identified, further checks are required to ensure weaknesses are eradicated. The decisions on the pay progression of staff were not finalised before

the end of the last academic year. The IEB needs to ensure that only staff who are rewarded have clear evidence which shows that the pupils they teach made good progress in their learning.

The IEB has taken decisive action to reduce the deficit budget. The recent restructuring of support staff has been completed. More now needs to be done to ensure the workforce has the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure high quality learning for all pupils. Effective, sharply targeted staff training is vital. A clear plan, linked to all staff training needs, is necessary to ensure gaps in staff knowledge and understanding can be addressed and the skills of all staff are developed well to enable them to effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities.

The IEB is monitoring the work of the school, but some aspects such as safeguarding require closer monitoring. Not all aspects of the safeguarding audit, which was carried out in May, have been addressed. This is also the case with the health and safety audit. The IEB needs to ensure that when there are changes to staffing, including roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures are quickly updated to ensure all staff and visitors are fully informed to enable them to fulfil their obligations.

The leadership of special educational needs is now more effective. The special educational coordinator has developed a suitable map of provision for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. The progress made by these pupils is being monitored. Regular meetings are now taking place with the teaching assistants who have particular responsibilities for supporting pupils with specific needs. The special educational needs coordinator is also responsible for checking on the attainment and progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, including pupils in receipt of this funding who are more able. The spending plan has been completed. It is important that the allocation of this funding is checked regularly to ascertain whether the funds are being used effectively enough to accelerate pupils' progress and close the gaps in attainment between these pupils and all other pupils.

Some essential policies and requirements are yet to be put in place. The school needs to ensure a suitable curriculum is devised to support pupils' progress. Policies to ensure the consistent application of the curriculum, such as teaching and learning, assessment and the teaching of each subject are required. The English subject leader has drafted a new English policy. It is important that all staff understand and deliver the agreed requirements and that parents are fully informed about the learning opportunities provided for their child.

External support

Following the judgements made at the two previous monitoring visits about the statement of action, the statement remains unfit for purpose. It does not include sufficient detail or sufficiently challenging targets to support the school during this

academic year to ensure removal of special measures. The arrangements for checking the school's progress and the effectiveness of the support are unclear. Sufficient information is not provided about the arrangements for informing parents of the proposed action, as well as ascertaining and taking their views into account.

Priorities for further improvement

- For the local authority to produce a suitable statement of action by the end of November.
- Ensure a school improvement plan is devised to enable checks on the school's progress to be carried out which measure the effectiveness of the school's actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Create a staff development plan to set out how the skills of all staff will be developed to enable the school to rapidly improve.