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5 December 2014

Ms Alison Hatch  
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 3 and 4 December 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in Year 4 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 Kent.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and improve its quality so it is at least good, to rapidly raise pupils' achievement, especially in reading and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - teachers use assessment information accurately to plan lessons that are hard enough for all groups of pupils, especially the most able, so they can achieve at the highest levels
  - teachers assess pupils' progress more effectively in lessons and then adapt work more quickly when necessary so pupils remain engaged and all behave well
  - teachers' marking always gives pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do next and pupils have time to respond to this feedback and correct their work
  - activities in the Reception class are purposeful and allow children to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, when working on their own or with adults
  - the good practice seen in some lessons is shared more effectively among the staff.
  
- Improve behaviour so that it is at least good by ensuring that:
  - adults who supervise playtimes and lunchtimes implement the behaviour policy more consistently so pupils' behaviour improves
  - all instances of reported bullying are followed up thoroughly and monitored closely to prevent them from reoccurring and to reassure parents, carers and pupils.
  
- Develop the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, by:
  - making sure that the quality of teaching is rigorously checked using information from work scrutiny, assessment information and lesson observations to secure judgements
  - creating and implementing accurate improvement plans, especially for English and mathematics, that are clearly focused on pupils' learning with time-limited, measurable outcomes for success so pupils' progress is improved
  - developing the skills of middle leaders so they can be effective in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility
  - providing high-quality professional development to improve the teaching of mathematics and to support those teachers whose practice is not yet good
  - rapidly implementing the performance management policy and setting targets for teachers that are closely linked to pupils' progress and achievement
  - developing partnerships with local schools that will enable teachers and leaders at all levels to observe good practice and improve their skills
  - ensuring governors gather more detailed and accurate information about the

school's performance so they are better able to challenge and support the school's leaders.

An external review of governance to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke informally with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. The inspector observed eight lessons, seven of which were conducted jointly with senior staff. Aspects of safeguarding arrangements were checked. The inspector looked at the English, mathematics and 'topic' work of a selection of pupils. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around the school at break times.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a part-time special educational needs coordinator and a part-time family liaison worker have been appointed. The Year 3 teacher was promoted in October to Key Stage 2 leader. The Year 5 teacher is on long-term sick leave and this class is being taught by a supply teacher. Since September 2014 the headteacher of West Malling Academy has provided leadership support to the headteacher. An external consultant has been employed one day a week to coach and support staff and to focus on the progress of more-able pupils.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage has significantly improved and was above national figures in 2014. This is because of a sharper focus on the development of children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use their frequent and detailed assessments of children's progress effectively to identify their next steps in learning.

Standards of achievement in reading across the school have improved. This is because of effective training for teachers, better use of teaching materials and the provision of reading books that match pupils' needs more closely. Additionally, a well-attended workshop for parents and carers about phonics (the sounds letters and words make) has helped to raise the profile and importance of reading. Pupils' reading records show they read frequently at home and at school.

While work in pupils' books shows that many are making better progress, this improvement remains variable between classes. Worryingly, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 make the slowest progress, particularly in mathematics. The school-wide focus on the improvement of writing skills means that pupils are being given more opportunities to write at length and in a variety of styles. As a result, achievement in writing continues to improve.

A range of targeted support is now in place for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The impact of this support is being more rigorously checked but it is too early to see the full impact of this work on pupils' achievement.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved further since the last monitoring inspection. This is because of effective in-school training and valuable work with local good and outstanding schools to share good practice. As a result, more teaching is good and some is outstanding, although there is still some that requires improvement because these good practices are not being used consistently.

Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the different needs of pupils and motivate them. Teachers ask questions that skilfully check and extend pupils' understanding and make adjustments to their teaching when necessary. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and how to be successful. In these lessons, teachers have realistically high expectations and challenge pupils. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, tasks were appropriately pitched at different levels and pupils were well supported to understand the basic principles of multiplication. As the lesson progressed, pupils' confidence and understanding grew and they relished the challenge of tackling more difficult questions.

The quality of teaching in the Reception class has improved. The outdoor area is better equipped and is being used effectively to support children's learning. Children are able to choose from a variety of tasks indoors and outdoors that encourage them to be inquisitive learners. Children are given frequent opportunities to practise their writing skills.

However, despite improvements, teaching is not yet securely good. Where teaching requires improvement, there is a focus on what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. As a result, pupils are not sure what good work will look like, the learning does not have a clear focus and pupils do not make the progress they should. Consequently, sometimes pupils lose interest and lack concentration; their distracted behaviour prevents them from making the progress they should. Additionally, there is insufficient challenge for some pupils, particularly the more-able.

The quality and frequency of feedback and marking pupils receive from teachers continue to improve. However, inconsistency remains about how and when pupils respond to these comments to improve future work. Work in pupils' books shows the standard of presentation has improved although this continues to vary across classes. Work in English and mathematics books is better presented than that completed in 'topic' books.

The majority of classroom environments are stimulating and interesting. They include displays about a wide variety of subjects pupils are studying. They are frequently used effectively by teachers and pupils to support learning and pupils are proud to see their work on display.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour continues to improve. Records kept by the school show that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying have decreased. A new behaviour policy has been introduced. As a result, pupils are clear about what will happen if they behave poorly and how they can earn rewards for good behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour is better in lessons and around the school and that all adults deal with behaviour more consistently. Pupils who spoke to the inspector said they feel safe in school. Pupils know about the different types of bullying and say that it is rare, but that if it does occur adults deal with it quickly and effectively.

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

The headteacher has made detailed plans for the school's improvement. Progress is reviewed regularly to ensure that deadlines are met and that the pace of improvement is maintained. The headteacher has taken robust and appropriate steps to improve the quality of teaching, drawing effectively on a wide range of external support. Teachers have responded to this help and advice positively and have worked hard to implement changes.

The school's system for processing assessment information is unwieldy. This makes it difficult and time-consuming for senior leaders to access the information they need. There are sensible plans in place to swiftly develop the headteacher's skills in managing and interpreting this information.

Performance management targets for teachers are linked rightly to pupils' progress. However, they relate only to pupils' progress in mathematics and do not sufficiently reflect the individual nature of each class.

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching based on a range of evidence. Teachers are given specific and detailed feedback about how they can improve and receive effective training and support to do this. Leaders check that necessary improvements are made quickly. However, feedback given to teachers after lesson observations does not always effectively evaluate the progress pupils make and the impact of teaching on this.

Key stage leaders have clearly defined roles for improving teaching and pupils' achievement. They have high expectations and a good understanding of what needs to be done for the school to improve further. They have written detailed and appropriate plans for improvement and are effectively monitoring progress in their

areas of responsibility based on a variety of evidence. Their leadership skills have developed as a result of good training and the sharing of good practice, both in school and from external sources. Improvements in mathematics are not happening quickly enough.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement in the school. Their regular monitoring visits enable them to effectively evaluate the progress that is being made in different areas of the school. They use this information well to provide an appropriate level of support and challenge to the headteacher.

### **External support**

The school is supported well by a range of external providers, including local good and outstanding schools. For example, teachers have benefited from the opportunity to observe outstanding teachers at West Malling Academy and Claremont Primary School. The local authority has provided effective support to improving whole-school assessment procedures and to refining planning for mathematics.