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Mrs Margaret Priggs
Headteacher
Sarratt Church of England Primary School
The Green
Sarratt
Rickmansworth
WD3 6AS

Dear Mrs Priggs

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sarratt Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2015, 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 October 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the Chair and two members of the Interim Executive Board, and a representative of the local authority. Some parents were spoken to informally during an open morning. All classrooms were visited with the interim headteacher, where books were looked at and pupils were spoken to about their work. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

An interim executive board (IEB) took over governance of the school in December 2014. Since the last inspection, the bursar, two teachers and a teaching assistant

have left the school. In January 2015, three teachers, two teaching assistants and a site manager joined the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and the IEB have a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve the school and you are creating a team of senior leaders and teachers who share your enthusiasm and determination. An experienced and knowledgeable IEB is now in place and members are providing effective support and challenge to you, and working to improve relationships with parents. Meetings have been held with parents to address some of the issues raised in the last inspection and to keep parents informed of the progress being made. Parents have been consulted on changes to new marking and homework policies and encouraged to come into school more regularly to discuss the progress of individual pupils with teachers. The school environment is revitalised and areas are being created for pupils to use for more independent learning.

All staff are now appropriately trained, including in first aid, to ensure the safety of pupils at the school. Staff are fully informed of safeguarding procedures. There is now a clear system for recording incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. You can fully account for the spending of the primary sports funding and have started to evaluate its impact. The school is a member of the Schools Sports Partnership. There are more opportunities for pupils to try new sports, such as tag rugby, gymnastics and basketball, and to become involved in competitive sport. Teachers' skills have been enhanced through the support of a specialist sports teacher. This work is increasing the enthusiasm and fitness of pupils.

Strong guidance from you and support from the local authority, including an education improvement partnership with another local primary school, is beginning to develop the leadership capacity within the school and tackle weak teaching. Staff are receiving training to become more effective leaders. As a result, they are developing the ability to drive the improvement needed in teaching and learning. You spoke positively about the support provided by local authority officers. They have helped to strengthen governance through the IEB, draft improvement plans and monitor their impact, and support individual teachers to develop aspects of their practice. The local authority's statement of action identifies an ambitious but appropriate range of actions and the personnel and resources needed to support improvement. It is closely aligned with the school's own action plan.

Some of the changes and new policies introduced by you, which had not had time to have an impact before the previous inspection, have now begun to improve the focus and enthusiasm of the pupils because teaching is starting to improve. You and

your senior team now hold teachers to account for the quality of their teaching. Lessons are regularly observed, and feedback from senior leaders and external partners is focused and direct. Expectations of teachers are higher, and some challenging work was seen during the classroom visits. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were working to understand what a metaphor is, and were challenged to create their own. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils were keen to learn and they talked confidently about their work. However, in some classes, students of different abilities are still being given the same work to do. Some more-able pupils, who easily completed the initial task, were not given harder work to move on to quickly enough. Lower ability pupils struggled to understand the task and some became confused about the concepts being taught.

Changes to the National Curriculum are now fully implemented in the school's schemes of work. However, systems for recording, tracking and monitoring progress are not yet effective because a clear system of assessment that ties in with the new curriculum still needs to be developed.

You have introduced a common marking policy which is being used by all teachers and is understood by pupils. However, the quality of feedback is still variable between classes and subjects. While some effective feedback was seen in English books, and older pupils could talk about what they needed to do to improve their writing, the marking and feedback in mathematics books is far less helpful to pupils.

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 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 Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire and the Board of Education for the Diocese of St Albans. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Daniel
Associate Inspector