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13 March 2015

Mrs Nichola Russell

Headteacher

Sandal Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Barnsley Road

Sandal

Wakefield

West Yorkshire

WF2 6AS

Dear Mrs Russell

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Sandal Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 March 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 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 February 2014. 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 a newly qualified teacher 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 Wakefield and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014**

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least consistently good or better to accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - any inadequate teaching that exists is eradicated
  - good use is made of information from assessing pupils' learning to plan work that meets their varying needs and abilities and that it is made clear to pupils what they are expected to learn from this work
  - learning motivates, engages and challenges pupils enough in their work so that they achieve well and their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are always good
  - pupils are given more opportunities to practise their writing skills, including writing longer pieces of work in subjects other than English, and by insisting that written work is always of the highest standard pupils are capable of achieving.
  
- Ensure that rigorous and robust systems in place to check that the school's health and safety policies and procedures are adhered to at all times.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders at all levels, including governance, in order to secure rapid improvements and to hold teachers to account by:
  - ensuring that all leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities so they can help to drive improvements in their areas and so that the responsibility for doing so does not rely too heavily on the headteacher
  - strengthening arrangements to check and improve the quality of teaching
  - providing support and training for all leaders, including governors, so that they can effectively analyse data about the performance of the different groups of pupils and evaluate whether any funding spent is making a positive difference.

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

An external review of 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 11 to 12 March 2015.**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, including teaching and learning. A range of documents were scrutinised as well as work in pupils' books. Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, pupils, a small number of parents and members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a nominated health and safety officer from the local authority.

### **Context**

Extensive building work to accommodate the increased numbers of pupils is being carried out on the site.

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

Evidence gathered during this inspection indicates that rates of progress made by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 are improving, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. School tracking data shows that a vast majority of pupils now make expected progress with many making better than expected progress. Results from national tests for Year 6 pupils in the last academic year for mathematics and reading, are still being withheld and are under review for the purpose of quality assurance by the Standards and Testing Agency. They have still not been made available to the school or parents.

In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in basic skills including reading, writing and mathematics is improving and most of those pupils that need to catch up quickly are beginning to do so. A small group of pupils who are not making enough progress have been identified by the school for further intervention. The achievement of children in the early years will be a focus for the next monitoring inspection.

School leaders have a more accurate view of the standards pupils are achieving. This is because systems are now in place to secure the accuracy of teachers' assessments regularly. They are working with other local schools to ensure assessments are accurate and reflect changes in expectations arising from the new curriculum requirements. As a result, teachers better identify and intervene with individuals and groups of pupils who need additional support and are filling the gaps in learning required to access the new curriculum. Systems are in place to track pupils' progress and provide detailed information about groups of pupils vulnerable to underachieving. This work has yet to fully secure information relating to the progress pupils are making because of new assessment arrangements relating to the new curriculum which is not fully embedded. The progress of pupils measured using the established assessment systems, based upon national curriculum levels, is not checked well enough. As a consequence, school leaders only have a partial view of the progress pupils are currently making.

## **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is improving. Actions taken by school leaders to address the performance of staff are seen in the consistent application of the school's approach to effective teaching across all classrooms. Evidence seen in books show that this is beginning to help accelerate pupils' learning. The school has insufficient evidence about the impact of teaching on learning during lessons to support their evaluations. This means further refinements in teaching to enhance learning are being missed. All teachers are eager to improve their practice and engage fully with support from each other, senior leaders and external training to help them to do so.

Work in pupils' books shows teachers' marking is consistent and comprehensive. It fully reflects the school's policy and pupils report they have frequent opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and feel well supported in their learning. Pupils have a good grasp of the language associated with their learning and a love of the technical vocabulary they need for different subjects. This flavours and informs their discussions on what they need to do to improve their work.

In lessons, teachers build on good relationships with pupils and the positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Teachers use timed activities to sharpen the focus of the task and use misconceptions well as an aid to revisit and improve or consolidate learning. They use questions effectively to probe pupils' understanding and help them develop their ideas. Opportunities for pupils' to apply basic literacy and numeracy skills in a range of scenarios is increasingly evident in their books.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. All staff place an emphasis on promoting positive, respectful behaviours between pupils and adults. As a result, the inspector saw many instances of politeness, care and helpfulness between pupils and towards adults. Behaviour observed in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 lessons show pupils engage well with their work and work well together when asked to do so. In these lessons, there were no instances of low-level disruptive behaviour and all pupils were engaged with their tasks. In the early years, on occasions where activities were not closely monitored, not all children engaged in the intended tasks so opportunities for learning were limited.

Pupils play well together on the playground and report that they have confidence in teachers and other adults to sort out any incidents. They say they feel safe. Most parents say that there are ample opportunities for them to raise and discuss their concerns and feel they get a positive response when they need to approach the school.

Safety remains a priority for senior leaders and the role of the pupils as 'safety advocates' continues to inform the actions the school takes. The school is working

with the Local Authority to amend and refine the Local Authority guidance following a recent concern.

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

Senior and middle leaders, led by the headteacher, have built on the improvements seen at the last monitoring inspection. They are highly committed to removing the school from special measures. Leaders at all levels have established good working relationships with a strong team ethos and an enthusiasm and energy to move the school forward. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the sharing of best practice is common place. Senior and middle leaders make a good contribution to securing information about the quality of teaching and work well with teachers to support them in improving their practice. The highly consistent application of the teaching and marking policies across the school along with increasingly effective safeguarding practices demonstrates increasingly robust leadership that engages staff with a clear sense of purpose. For example, all staff including governors have reviewed recent national serious case reviews to reflect on their own practice and implemented further actions. This has heightened awareness of all staff and resulted in them recognising and registering safeguarding concerns more quickly, enabling more timely reviews and intervention where necessary.

Whilst there is evidence of improvements in teaching, this evidence is not comprehensive enough to fully inform leaders' evaluations and identify with precision the next steps teachers need to make to improve their practice. This is because the evidence lacks sufficient detail about the learning taking place in lessons. Additionally, new assessment arrangements relating to the new curriculum is yet to provide sufficient information about pupils' progress over time. School leaders and teachers recognise that a sharper focus on the outcomes in lessons is required to give them a fuller picture of the impact of improved teaching.

Governors have a sharper focus on the impact of actions the school has taken. This is because they have a better understanding of the educational outcomes they should expect to see and can then provide a robust level of challenge. Governors receive increasingly detailed reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders. A recent review of how the school uses its additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been acted on and further actions have been identified. The governing body receive a range of assessment information about pupils' achievement, including that of different groups of pupils, such as those disadvantaged pupils and other groups at risk of underachieving. Governors do not shirk from asking challenging questions and accessing further information when needed. This enhances their ability to hold school leaders more readily to account and have a better understanding of what the school's next steps should be. The improving effectiveness of the governing body is reflected in a review of governance recently commissioned by the school to ensure that their practice is as sharp-edged as it needs to be.

## **External support**

The local authority continues to provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to school leaders and has a regular presence in the school. This work is highly valued by school leaders. Support includes visits to check on the quality of teaching, reviewing action-planning, working with middle leaders on cross-curricular planning and supporting working in partnership with an outstanding school. This partnership work is in place and is helping provide focussed support for individual teachers.