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Mrs Gill Gooch
St Mary and All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Wensley Road
Coley Park, Reading
Berkshire, RG1 6DU

Dear Mrs Gooch

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Mary and All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit with Caroline Dulon Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 19 and 20 May, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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's improvement plan is now 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, the Director of Children's Services for Reading and the Diocesan Director for Oxford.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2014

- Secure essential improvements to leadership and management at all levels by:
 - implementing rigorous and effective systems for monitoring all aspects of the school's work,
 - ensuring that self-evaluations are accurate developing the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders, so they guide the work of the school and challenge and support middle leaders and other members of staff
 - effectively improving middle leadership so that it has greater impact on pupils' achievement
 - ensuring governors hold all leaders, especially the headteacher, properly to account
 - broadening and deepening the curriculum so that it fully meets the needs of pupils
 - ensuring that procedures for managing teachers' performance are fully effective and staff are held to account for their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Significantly improve teaching to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils in all subjects by:
 - raising teachers' expectations for all pupils and groups of pupils so that work is appropriately challenging and builds on what pupils already know and can do
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to inform their planning so that work set in lessons consistently meets the needs of pupils with differing abilities
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring that activities in the early years are purposeful and relevant, helping children to build on what they have already learned.
- Improve pupils' behaviour through:
 - consistently setting and expecting high standards of behaviour so pupils are ready to learn more quickly and know how to keep themselves safe
 - urgently tackling incidents of bullying and racist behaviour.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management 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 management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 May 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim executive headteacher, the head of school, staff, pupils, members of the governing body, two representatives from the local authority and the diocesan officer.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit in January 2015, the headteacher has left the school. The headteacher of Caversham Primary School has been appointed as the interim executive headteacher for two days a week. The deputy headteacher is now the head of school. The school business manager (SBM) left the school at the end of January. A new SBM has been appointed. The post of assessment coordinator has been created. A new senior leadership team has been established. This team includes the executive headteacher, the head of school, two newly promoted assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the assessment coordinator and the SBM. There are three new middle leaders: a mathematics subject leader, an English subject leaders, and a leader responsible for the use of pupil premium funding. Four teachers have left the school. Three part-time teachers have joined, including a specialist music teacher. There is a supply teacher covering the Nursery class and a part-time supply teacher in one of the Year 1 classes. One teaching assistant, two early years practitioners and one welfare assistant have left. One welfare assistant has become an early years practitioner.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' achievement is not rising quickly enough. There are signs that the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding (additional government funds for pupils in receipt of free school meals or in local authority care) and all other pupils in the school is closing. Overall, too many pupils are not making enough progress to catch up and reach levels of attainment that are expected for their age. Currently, the school's information shows that the percentage of pupils on track to achieve Level 4 by the end of Year 6 remains below the government floor targets. In most year groups, pupils are two terms behind in mathematics and three terms behind in writing. There is a mixed picture of pupils' progress across the school in reading, partly due to previous poor teaching of early reading skills. As a consequence, some older pupils are unable to tackle unfamiliar words well enough. Recently, the school has reintroduced a more systematic way of teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) which is helping younger pupils to make better progress. Older pupils who did not benefit from good quality teaching of phonics remain one term behind where they should be in reading. The teaching of

reading to guide and probe pupils' understanding of different texts is beginning to show positive signs of improvement.

The quality of teaching

Teachers are beginning to plan lessons which more effectively meet the learning needs of pupils with differing abilities in their classes. Some teachers are better able to do this than others. In some classes, lower ability pupils struggle because tasks do not take sufficient account of their different starting points. This hinders their progress. In the same way, the most able pupils in some classes are not challenged sufficiently well to make better progress because they spend too much time carrying out activities that are too easy for them.

Teachers use their subject knowledge of literacy to build pupils' spelling and grammar skills. The use of technical language in literacy supports pupils' understanding well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed a good understanding of the use of imperative verbs to persuade and adverbial phrases to capture the interest of the reader. Sometimes in mathematics lessons, teachers do not use accurate mathematical language which leads to misconceptions and errors.

The quality of pupils' written work is showing signs of improvement. Teachers expect pupils to set out their work neatly, with a clear and legible handwriting style. The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils has improved since the introduction of the new marking policy. Pupils understand the reason why their work is highlighted in pink, showing what they have done well. They also know that where their work is highlighted in green they need to make improvements. Teachers provide useful feedback to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils usually respond to this well.

In the early years, observations of children's learning are used to plan their next steps. Adults know the children well but do not always check on their understanding well enough during activities that children choose for themselves. As a result, opportunities to develop children's learning through appropriately targeted questions are sometimes missed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are positive about the recent improvement in behaviour in lessons and around the school. They understand the new behaviour policy and like the reward system which encourages them to behave well. During the inspection, pupils moved around the school calmly and quietly. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and each other. They say they feel safe and know what to do and who to go to if they have a problem. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mainly positive in lessons. In a few lessons where expectations were not always made clear or where the behaviour policy was not consistently implemented, some off task behaviour was observed.

Attendance is slightly higher than in the last academic year. Even though school leaders have emphasised the importance of a punctual start to the school day, too many pupils still arrive late. This is a concern because pupils miss vital learning time when they arrive late and the learning of those who are punctual is interrupted too.

Although pupils say that bullying still exists occasionally, they have a much better understanding of what constitutes different types of bullying and know what to do if it occurs. The anti-bullying week held in the spring term raised their awareness and also informed parents about the procedures for tackling bullying at St Mary and All Saints.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

There has been a number of changes in the leadership of the school. The recently established new leadership team has strengthened the school's ability to tackle the areas needing improvement. The school improvement plan now provides a clear set of actions to promote improvement. The plan would benefit from more sharply focused steps to measure its success, closely linked to the difference the actions are expected to make towards improving pupils' achievement. School leaders are now in a better position to address weaknesses in the curriculum and regularly check on the quality of teaching. However, because senior leaders are very new to their roles and responsibilities, the impact of their work is limited. Training to develop their leadership skills is underway.

The interim executive headteacher and head of school are working well together to establish a clear and systematic process for monitoring the quality of teaching, checking the quality of pupils' work and gathering accurate information about pupils' achievement. The assessments teachers make on pupils' learning and progress are being checked by senior leaders and groups of teachers from other schools. This has resulted in a more accurate picture of the standards pupils are reaching. A new system to track the progress that pupils make has been implemented. Teachers have a better understanding of the progress that pupils are making. Regular meetings between teachers and senior leaders identify pupils who are falling behind. Teachers and school leaders discuss and agree a range of strategies to begin to help pupils catch up. The new curriculum leader, in discussion with all teachers, is developing a more structured, broad and appropriately balanced curriculum for all year groups. This is due to be completed at the start of June.

The review of governance has been completed. There were many positive aspects of the work of governors. However, the structure of the committees is being reviewed. The governing body's strategic committee is meeting more regularly to check on pupils' progress. Governors are questioning school leaders more thoroughly and gathering information themselves through visits to the school and discussions with staff. School leaders are checking on the performance of staff more systematically

and have tackled some underperformance. Governors know that procedures for managing the performance of teachers effectively are not in place.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding has also been completed. The review identified a wide range of issues for school leaders to address. An officer from the local authority is working alongside the pupil premium leader to ensure that the current allocation of funding is targeted effectively and to evaluate the impact of last year's funding. Leaders and governors know that this information must be made publicly available on the school website.

A meeting was held for parents in the spring term so that they could better understand what the school needs to do to improve. A parents' forum has been established so that parents and staff can work together to improve the school.

External support

The local authority is providing a range of support and guidance for school leaders and teachers. The English and mathematics advisers are working alongside teachers to improve aspects of teaching. However, the impact of their work to rapidly improve pupils' progress is yet to be seen. The diocesan adviser continues to support school leaders and the religious education leader to prepare for their next statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools.