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Simon Tapp
Headteacher
St Anne's CofE VC Primary School
Wyre Hill
Bewdley
DY12 2UQ

Dear Mr Tapp

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Anne's CofE VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 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 March 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher; the phase leader responsible for the early years, Key Stage 1 and the pupil premium; and representatives of the governing body and the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. The outcomes of the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's website were also considered.

Context

Three teachers are leaving at the end of the summer. Staffing has been reorganised to accommodate the changes in September. The school's leaders, governors and Worcestershire Anglican diocese are at an early stage of discussions with the Department for Education regarding the possibility of future academy status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You lost no time in identifying clear priorities and appropriate actions for speedy improvement. All staff are suitably aware of their roles and responsibilities to bring about the necessary changes and accelerate pupils' progress. You have carefully distributed appropriate responsibilities between senior leaders, middle managers and teachers on upper pay scales. Everyone is suitably aware of their role and accountabilities.

You have correctly raised your expectations of all staff and insisted on the implementation of agreed procedures. There is now a culture of 'non-negotiables' so that staff are clear about what they must do to secure improved teaching and learning. You and other school leaders check regularly that agreed procedures are carried out to the necessary standard and provide clear development points for on-going improvement. You have developed a clear schedule for training, checking and evaluating to drive the momentum of change. Three local authority advisers have provided substantial guidance in improving teachers' written feedback to pupils. As a consequence, pupils are more responsive to teachers' comments and they are keen to improve their work. Pupils say that the new way of marking helps them to do better work.

The school improvement adviser worked closely with leaders to more accurately track the progress of disadvantaged pupils, identify their individual weaknesses and plan specific support. Leaders meet with teachers every four weeks to consider pupils' progress, identify those pupils in danger of falling behind and agree the necessary actions to stem further decline. The suitability and effectiveness of actions are kept under constant review and amended where necessary. Current school records show that the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 6 has exceeded that of their peers. As a result, the gap in attainment is beginning to close in reading, writing and mathematics. You are further developing the school's system to track pupils' progress to include all other year groups across the school. A review of the pupil premium is planned for September.

The teaching and learning advisers have helped to raise teachers' expectations of learners; for example, girls' performance in mathematics and the quality of boys' writing. The advisers have worked successfully with staff to establish a clear focus on pupils' learning. Pupils quickly stepped up to the new demands of them. They proved they were keen to learn and develop. Teachers have improved their planning to ensure that learning is sequential and amended in response to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in any lesson.

The review of governance was completed in June this year. The review confirmed that governors did not fulfil their strategic role. Governors have put together an action plan in response to the review, with clear priorities for their development. They understand what they need to do and they are keen to receive the necessary training to meet their statutory responsibilities. An audit of governor skills will be conducted in the near future which will help to determine future governor roles and responsibilities. In addition, the audit will identify gaps in current governors' expertise, which will then inform future recruitments to the governing body. Governors are increasingly aware of school priorities, the actions leaders have taken and the impact of change. For example, the governor representative made reference to attendance figures, where improvements had been achieved and where there was still work to be done.

Your school action plan includes all areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection. The planned actions are clear, pertinent to the area for development and sufficiently detailed. Priorities are suitably sequenced and expected outcomes are realistic. Many of the actions for improvement are planned for summer and autumn 2015. Nevertheless, they rightly reflect the urgency to establish the necessary skills to lead effectively and teach to a standard which enables pupils to succeed. You regularly review the effectiveness of actions taken which, in turn, inform mid- and long-term planning. People responsible for leading specific actions are identified. Occasionally, the senior leadership team is named and so it is unclear who is accountable for the outcomes of the action to be taken. Methods to check the school's progress and judge how well it is doing are appropriate. Consideration has not been given to the financial resources necessary to secure the essential on-going improvements in the near future. Necessary time has been identified but the cost is not included in the plan.

The school improvement adviser knows the school well. She works closely with school leaders to identify priorities, and to provide tailored support and challenge where appropriate. The local authority has produced a detailed statement of action. The targets are clear, well timed and suitably ambitious. All proposed actions relate closely to the identified areas for improvement. The local authority has invested considerable time and expertise in supporting the school's journey of improvement. The school improvement adviser has planned a good balance of ongoing support and checks to make sure that the planned actions and expected outcomes are met. The monthly core group meetings monitor the work of the learning and teaching advisers. In addition, the project board evaluates how well the school is improving and considers any barriers to success.

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 Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire local authority and the Worcestershire Anglican diocese. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway

Her Majesty's Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese

