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Ms Elizabeth Dickenson  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's CofE Primary School  
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Crawley  
RH10 6NU

Dear Ms Dickenson

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Andrew's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. Plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- work with the local authority and diocese to secure good leadership and management for the school from January 2016
- scrutinise all aspects of the school's work and arrive at reliable and secure judgements of effectiveness
- define in precise terms the improvements that will be brought about in teaching and learning at key points for each class in Key Stages 1 and 2, exactly how this will happen, who is responsible and what monitoring will take place to ensure high levels of accountability
- address staffing issues with urgency to secure consistently good teaching for every class.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection I met with you and other senior staff, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and representatives of the diocese to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body prior to the visit and another with the local authority's area senior adviser after the inspection. The school's improvement plans were evaluated. We briefly visited every class to see teaching and learning.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection both you and your deputy, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, have resigned; you will both leave the school at the end of this term. Two other teachers have also resigned their posts and will also leave at the end of term. Three staff joined the school in September.

## **Main findings**

The school lacks a sufficiently accurate and robust understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and its future direction. As a consequence, the development plans cannot drive improvement. They lack precision and too many of the desired outcomes are couched in terms of actions to be taken by senior leaders and others, rather than their impact on pupils' learning. There is an emphasis on monitoring and evaluating throughout the plans, but no sense of what exactly will be monitored, and how much difference will have been made at key points. The leadership and management plan lacks any detail around the use of performance management and associated training for staff.

Staff morale is low and turnover is very high. It is unclear how the school will organise teaching in January. Governors are well aware that the resignations of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher mean that they will have to work urgently and closely with the local authority and diocese to secure the leadership and management of the school from January 2016.

The improving picture of outcomes anticipated in 2015 proved to be optimistic. The average achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 in writing was lower than in 2014, and a lot lower in both mathematics and reading. The average standards reached by pupils in all three subjects were below national averages for the first time in many years. Pupils achieved good standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2. However, pupils' progress in reading by the end of Year 6, although better than previously, was still below average. Outcomes in reading were only broadly in line with national averages as a result. The progress made by pupils in mathematics was poor; as a consequence, pupils' achievements in mathematics by the end of Year 6 were very disappointing. The steady reduction in the gaps between the

achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school by the end of Key Stage 2 over several years continued – especially in writing. However, very large gaps remain between these pupils' achievements and those of others nationally, especially in mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling – equivalent to nearly two years' learning in each.

The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2015 remained broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics (the sounds that letters make) by the end of Year 1 rose to become similar to the national average but large differences remained between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others.

These outcomes in 2015 were a surprise to the school – indicating that assessment had been inaccurate and systems to monitor and check outcomes had not worked well enough. Despite intensive support from the local authority, there are few signs of improvement in the quality of teaching and in current outcomes for pupils.

Governors now show a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, relationships between you and the governing body have broken down. This has meant that you and governors have not been able to work together effectively in the best interests of the pupils.

Pupils remain willing, interested and well behaved in lessons. We saw them enjoying a wide range of mathematics-based challenges and activities in Reception and in Years 1 to 6. In some classes, including Reception, there was a sense of purpose and a focus on learning. However, in too many lessons visited it was unclear to both of us what the desired impact on learning was meant to be, and how the activities were supporting this learning. You admitted that the school's response to the need to improve mathematics lacks coherence and is not contributing to better achievement.

Attendance has not improved this term when compared to the same period last year. Steps taken to improve it have been ineffective.

I have serious concerns about the sufficiency of the actions being taken to make the necessary improvements. Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority formally expressed its concerns around the quality of leadership and management in the school to you and to the governing body earlier this term. In response, it has provided significant amounts of support for leadership and management and support for teaching and learning, literacy and phonics, and

mathematics. This support has not had the desired impact because of weaknesses on the part of the school's leadership to put in place the changes required.

Local authority officers were as surprised as the school by the significantly lower than expected outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2015. Their previously optimistic judgement of the effectiveness of the school was one of the reasons why governors did not have sufficient warning signs about important weaknesses in its work. Local authority representatives agree with me that the school's development planning is unfit for purpose but have not communicated this to you.

The diocese has worked very closely with the governing body and the local authority to maintain clarity and coherence in the support provided to the school. It has been involved usefully in all significant conversations around strategies to improve outcomes and strengthen the quality of the leadership of the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex, and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**