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

Dear Mr Tapp

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

Following my visit with Alun Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector and Khalid Din, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 14–15 October 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2015. 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 taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. Newly qualified teachers may be appointed to Key Stage 2 and Reception if required.

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 Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2015

- Urgently improve teaching so that all groups of pupils make good or better progress by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - set tasks that are matched to pupils' abilities, particularly by giving harder work to the most-able pupils
 - mark work frequently, accurately identify errors in pupils' work and ensure that pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs, learn from their mistakes
 - ensure that, by listening to pupils read in Years 1 and 2, standards improve in reading through more frequent assessment of pupils' progress and by moving them on to new books more quickly
 - check the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 more frequently in lessons to make sure that they are working as hard as possible.
- Improve pupils' achievement, including by using pupil premium funds to develop effective strategies for accelerating disadvantaged pupils' progress and close the gap in attainment between them and other pupils.
- Analyse data on pupils' attendance more frequently and in greater depth and use the results to target actions to improve the attendance of those pupils currently eligible for free school meals.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the headteacher and senior leaders:
 - record assessments of pupils' progress accurately
 - analyse data on pupils' achievement accurately and in greater depth to identify key weaknesses in the performance of different groups of pupils
 - use the results of such analyses to draw up a comprehensive and accurate list of priorities for the school's improvement and find out what aspects of teaching are causing pupils to underachieve
 - have higher expectations of teachers and set them more challenging targets when managing their performance
 - develop the role of subject leaders and those responsible for other aspects of the school's work, particularly with respect to understanding data and improving all aspects in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve governance by ensuring that governors:
 - analyse and check data for themselves
 - provide greater challenge to the headteacher and hold him to account for the school's performance
 - develop a better understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and challenge the headteacher on the outcomes when necessary.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 14–15 October 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the coordinator for special educational needs, the leaders for pupil premium and assessment, groups of pupils, the Chair, Vice-Chair and staff representative of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Temporary staff are covering for a maternity leave and other long-term absences due to staff ill-health.

Outcomes for pupils

Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2015 improved in all subjects in line with the national average for 2014. All pupils in Year 6, including the disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs, made at least expected progress from their different starting points. Almost three quarters of the Reception children achieved a good level of development. The proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters represent) check rose to 86% this year and all Year 2 pupils retaking the check were successful.

Pupils' books show an increasingly competent use of descriptive writing. For example, one boy wrote when describing an imaginary dragon, 'Its scaly jewels hung in waves of elegance'. Pupils in both key stages are developing skills to evaluate their own work and that of others. Their oral and written feedback is often incisive. Pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses confidently. The quality of pupils' presentation does not live up to their imaginative and expressive writing. Handwriting skills are not taught with sufficient accuracy or regularity and pupils do not systematically apply the skills they learn. Younger pupils often mistakenly write capital letters in sentences and these errors are not corrected. Pupils do not apply the skills learned in writing to other subjects.

Work in pupils' mathematics books was variable. In some classes, pupils cover a suitable range of work and they demonstrate a variety of methods for calculation. In other classes, there is little evidence of problem-solving and the application of skills in practical situations. Most work reflected appropriate age-related expectations and lessons clearly built upon previous learning.

Pupils read with interest and enjoyment. They read aloud with accuracy, expression and full understanding. Older pupils know about different authors and speak knowledgeably about their favourites. They read a suitable range of books, including

fantasy, mystery, biographies, traditional literature and a breadth of non-fiction. Younger pupils do not always apply their knowledge of phonics to read or write unfamiliar words.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers are careful to plan a sequence of lessons where all pupils, regardless of their ability, can contribute, practise and improve their skills. In most, but not all classes, the most-able pupils are suitably challenged and pupils who experience difficulties are supported. The new marking policy is consistently applied. However, simple and frequent spelling errors are too often ignored and not corrected.

Teachers consistently explain the learning focus for each lesson and share clear expectations so that pupils know exactly what they have to do and why. Teachers use displays in their classrooms and in the corridors to inspire and inform pupils. The 'working walls' are full of helpful, relevant reminders so that pupils can readily refer to them for ideas or checks. Occasionally, pupils revert to asking an adult, but they are increasingly able to find solutions for themselves. Teachers are careful to ask pertinent questions of pupils so that they can gauge pupils' understanding. Occasionally, teachers accept one-word answers instead of encouraging pupils to extend and develop their responses. Teachers use subject-related vocabulary well and some are beginning to expect pupils to use these terms in their responses. Where these skills are well established, pupils understand and correctly use terms such as higher-level conjunctions, homophones and similes to explain their choices.

Teachers work hard to plan a sequence of lessons over time to build on pupils' skills and knowledge. This planning is helping pupils to effectively demonstrate progress. Teachers adapt their learning plans in response to what pupils know and can do. Teachers are at an early stage of planning a precise learning journey towards the age-related, end-of-year expectations in each subject. All staff and leaders are working hard to ensure the new assessment system helps them to accurately track pupils' progress and precisely indicate the next learning steps.

All adults are increasingly taking responsibility for providing targeted support for pupils wherever it is needed. Nevertheless, adults are not consistently deployed effectively. Adults do not always seize the opportunities for pupils to learn in smaller groups so that pupils receive more pertinent explanations or support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour was described as 'exemplary' in the section 5 inspection report. Everyone in the school has continued to develop strong, mutually respectful relationships at all levels.

Pupils confirmed that it was very rare to hear bad language in school and they believed behaviour, including at playtimes, was good. Older pupils distinguished clearly between bullying and friendship issues and asserted, 'arguing is good for the debating club'. They had every faith that a reported concern would be dealt with immediately. They are proud to earn rewards and fully understand the school's rules and sanctions. Pupils are suitably aware of how to use the internet safely at home and in school.

The systems for tracking pupils' attendance and reasons for absence are robust. The headteacher is vigilant in following up persistent absence and works closely with appropriate agencies where concerns exist. As a consequence, attendance has improved.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher works with quiet determination to build an increasingly effective team so that the school can move forward quickly, confidently and purposefully. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who provides a reflective and measured approach to change and practice. The headteacher speedily distributed leadership responsibilities to appropriate members of staff. They have risen quickly to the challenge and fulfil their responsibilities with a high level of commitment and diligence. The leadership team lost no time to identify the necessary short-term actions for improvement, but longer-term goals are now developing.

The senior leadership team has provided ongoing training for staff to develop the necessary expertise. The leadership team frequently checks the quality of teaching. Leaders are absolutely clear that teachers are accountable for pupils' rates of progress. Leaders keep a close track of pupils' progress and analyse their findings to further refine approaches to teaching. As a result, teachers' expectations of pupils have risen and pupils are achieving at an accelerated pace.

The headteacher has ensured that the school keeps abreast of current national school developments. He worked closely with other local schools to develop a system to record and track teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. He ensured that all staff received the appropriate training to ensure accuracy and brought staff together from other schools to check each other's judgements. There are suitable plans to implement, review and refine the system in the near future.

A phase leader worked closely with the local authority to produce a policy setting out how the disadvantaged pupils' learning needs will be met. She has fully evaluated past practice to identify what worked well and what needed to improve. She established a clear view of where gaps in learning persisted and ensured the necessary support. She created a range of approaches aligned with specific subject needs, to increase the rates of pupils' academic progress while also developing their self-confidence and aspirations. Recent analysis confirmed that the gaps in

achievement between groups are closing speedily. The recently trialled short-burst introductions to lessons for targeted groups have proven particularly successful, as pupils feel better equipped to join in the whole-class lesson and succeed alongside their friends.

The recently appointed temporary coordinator for special educational needs ensures that all teachers understand their responsibilities in planning appropriate lessons and provide the necessary support wherever it is needed. She liaises with external agencies whenever specialist knowledge is required. The needs of pupils have been carefully reviewed so that the right level of support is planned and provided for the pupils most in need.

Following the review of governance, governors welcomed training, for example in analysing school data. They are now able to identify and compare the progress made by different groups of pupils and consider the impact of the school's actions to address known weaknesses. All governors have gained increased confidence to challenge leaders, identify any anomaly and seek evidence of resolutions. Challenge is now recorded in detail and action points are set and checked systematically. Governors have established a protocol for all their visits to the school so that everyone shares clear expectations of their role. Governors are developing processes to ensure that they consider the school's work, evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken and contribute strategically to necessary developments. Individual governors have been selected to work with staff on particular aspects or phases of the school's work.

Governors have restructured the committees to help them focus on the necessary priorities. The three sub-committees now consist of: staffing; performance, learning and achievement; and finance. The strategic committee oversees the work of all other committees. Governors have worked closely with the headteacher to plan, introduce and implement new policies for the management of staff performance and salary decisions.

The pace of change and the rate of improvement since the section 5 inspection are impressive. Leaders are rightly focused on securing pupils' progress and attainment within the new National Curriculum. Nevertheless, they are determined that the pupils will benefit from the full range of subjects and learning experiences.

External support

The local authority continues to provide specific and relevant support for leaders, teachers and governors. Training was initially provided for all staff at all levels. Support is now moving to a more targeted, needs-driven approach in recognition of the school's own growing capacity for determining improvement wherever necessary. The school improvement adviser regularly visits the school, which enables

her to adapt the deployment of local authority expertise to where it is most needed. The project board meets every half term to evaluate the school's progress and has noted the willingness of all staff to establish ongoing improvement.

The school improvement adviser agrees with inspectors that the pace of change in the school is impressive.