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5 January 2018

Miss Gillian Wilson  
Head of School  
St Oswald's Church of England Primary Academy  
Cross Lane  
Great Horton  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD7 3JT

Dear Miss Wilson

**Special measures monitoring inspection of St Oswald's Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Colin Lofthouse, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 12–13 December 2017, 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 that 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 that took place in July 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2016.**

- Swiftly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least consistently good across all subjects by:
  - increasing expectations of what pupils can do so they are consistently high
  - setting work that matches the needs and abilities of pupils and challenges them appropriately
  - making sure that pupils of all abilities present their work neatly and take pride in their work
  - skilfully questioning pupils to probe and deepen their understanding
  - assessing pupils' learning to adjust work appropriately if they are not making good progress.
- Rapidly improve outcomes for all groups of pupils to make sure that they are at least good by:
  - accelerating pupils' progress so that attainment is at least average in reading, writing and mathematics
  - closing gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
  - deepening pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects, especially science, history, geography and modern foreign languages
  - expecting pupils to write at length in a wide range of subjects to deepen their knowledge
  - strengthening the application of mathematics across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the provision in the early years so that:
  - children can access more reading, writing and number activities in the outdoor area
  - boys are engaged more effectively in learning so that their progress in reading, writing and mathematical skills improves at a faster rate.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership at all levels by making sure that:
  - teachers' knowledge is strengthened to secure good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and across a wide range of subjects for all groups of pupils
  - teachers are sufficiently skilled to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities have their needs met and make good progress
  - subject leaders ensure that the school's policy on marking is applied and

incisive feedback is provided to which pupils respond in detail so they improve their work

- subject leaders check pupils' work thoroughly to ensure that teachers are assessing pupils' work accurately in all subjects
- pupils' attendance is at least average and persistent absenteeism is below average
- pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive with all the adults who teach them
- pupil premium funding is used effectively to strengthen the attainment and attendance of disadvantaged pupils
- senior leaders ensure that governors are provided with reliable information to make informed decisions.

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 third monitoring inspection on 12–13 December 2017**

### **Evidence**

The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents. They met with the head of school, a range of other school leaders, groups of pupils, several parents, the chair and vice-chair of the academy transformation board, and the chief executive officer, primary director, director of teaching and learning and a consultant from the multi-academy trust.

### **Context**

There have been very few changes to the school's staffing since the last monitoring visit. A new nursery teacher joined the school in September 2017. The school has admitted a number of new pupils in a range of year groups. Many of these pupils are new to English and are receiving a programme of additional support to develop their English language.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders' ambitious vision for improving the school has resulted in continued improvements since the last monitoring visit. You have established a team of leaders who now have greater clarity about their roles and responsibilities. They are held effectively to account through the newly implemented system for performance management. You have made sure that plans for improvement, performance management, school self-evaluation and training are now seamlessly linked. This is giving leaders a clear sense of direction and the ability to check the progress made towards improvement targets.

Similarly, a more effective system for leaders to check the quality and impact of teaching and learning is resulting in a faster pace of improvement. The new approach, which sets ambitious targets, involves a wider range of leaders in supporting and developing staff and identifying strengths and weaknesses throughout school. Leaders are now able to use this growing awareness of where teaching is most and least effective to help them to accurately prioritise training and development needs. However, leaders accept the need to embed the new procedures further so that improvements gather momentum at an even faster pace. This will be critical in making sure that the positive rates of progress seen this term are maintained and accelerated where possible.

You have galvanised the entire staff team by creating a culture of learning and development. Leaders take care to celebrate each individual's strengths and use these as models of effective practice which other colleagues learn from. As a result, staff feel well supported and valued and are therefore united in their commitment to your vision for pupils' achievement. Leaders have made increasing use of the support and training provided by the multi-academy trust. This has been highly

beneficial in developing the confidence and skills of teachers and middle leaders. The culture you have created is helping you to secure a more stable and committed staff team. Consequently, there have been few staffing changes this term.

Governors continue to hold leaders to account for school improvement and are appropriately skilled to provide effective challenge. However, you recognise that a more consistent reporting mechanism from leaders to governors would add further rigour to the process.

In contrast to the last monitoring visit, you have now been able to extend your attention on teaching and learning to include other areas of improvement which were identified at the last inspection. There has been particular success with developing leadership at all levels. Leadership of provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has taken shape and is much more effective in tracking the progress of groups and individuals. Likewise, leadership across the wider curriculum, beyond English and mathematics, has been developed. The introduction of a new curriculum is inspiring pupils and giving them access to a broader range of subjects. Leaders are successful in ensuring that pupils are increasingly working at an age-appropriate standard and are developing subject-specific skills.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Leaders' in-depth checking of the quality of teaching and learning in each year group is helping teachers to take increasing responsibility for developing their practice. Teachers are well supported by regular feedback from leaders which helps them to consider the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. While there is still variability as teachers embed the new approaches which have been introduced, expectations of pupils' work and learning behaviour have improved dramatically. As a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are becoming much more independent. They are becoming more familiar with using displays and resources to support them when they find their work difficult. This is helping pupils to be much more resilient and to persevere when faced with challenging tasks.

Teachers throughout school are much more aware of the expected standards which pupils should be working at. This means that teachers are now planning tasks which more frequently offer challenge for pupils while also addressing any gaps in their learning. Pre-learning tasks at the beginning of each unit of work in English and mathematics help teachers to identify pupils' next steps in learning. Consequently, teachers are then able to concentrate on helping pupils develop the identified skills as they progress through a unit of work. This is resulting in pupils making better gains in their learning, particularly during the last term.

Additionally, staff are starting to use more questions which develop pupils' thinking and get them to have a go, even when a task is difficult. Pupils are also sharing

their ideas with each other more frequently. These strategies are supporting pupils' progress and development. However, you recognise that as teachers get used to the new teaching approaches, there is some inconsistency in how effectively the strategies are used. For example, sometimes teachers do not notice quickly enough when pupils have made errors in their learning. In these cases, learning slows for some groups of pupils and the opportunity for teachers to discuss misconceptions with the whole class is missed.

You took prompt action following the last monitoring visit to ensure that assessment information is increasingly reliable. Likewise, much more ambitious targets have been set which are based on pupils' attainment at the end of the last key stage but also take into account any underachievement and the need for accelerated progress. Teachers have taken part in regular moderation activities through the multi-academy trust and with other local schools. Consequently, teachers have an accurate understanding of the expectations for the year group in which they teach. You accept that although teachers are more aware of the expected standards and have higher expectations, some still underestimate what pupils have achieved. You are making sure that all leaders challenge this to ensure increasing accuracy.

The early years leader has supported the development of the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. As a result of this support, teachers now demonstrate sound subject knowledge and use a range of strategies within each session so that pupils practise reading, spelling and writing. Teachers assess pupils' learning throughout each session and make adjustments as needed so that pupils are more quickly progressing with their phonics skills.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils continue to be friendly and polite to visitors and each other. Improvements in behaviour have continued and there has been a reduction in the frequency and severity of incidents. These improvements have prompted leaders to introduce a new sanction and reward system so that it matches the higher expectations that staff have of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have also introduced a new system for tracking behaviour incidents so that they are able to intervene at the earliest indication of a concern. Pupils' attitudes to learning are now almost always consistently positive. Their conduct around school at breaktime and lunchtime is equally impressive.

Leaders have ensured that the improvements seen in attendance at the previous monitoring visits have been sustained and continue to show further improvement. Attendance overall increased by the end of the last school year and was very close to the national average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils was even higher and improved to 96.2%. Persistent absence was also positive, at 8.9%.

The newly introduced vertical tutor groups mean that pupils of different ages have the opportunity to talk to each other and share their learning experiences. This is

giving pupils a better understanding of each other and is helping to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. You are keen to use these groups as a means of further developing pupils' understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy, respect and the rule of law. This remains limited at present.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Pupils' progress over the last year has not improved rapidly enough in most year groups to bring about the required improvements. However, as a result of stronger teaching in Year 6 last year, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a distinct improvement compared with progress in 2016, which was significantly below the national average in reading and mathematics. Over time, though, pupils' progress has not been sufficient to enable the proportion meeting the expected standard to be in line with attainment seen nationally.

As a result of improving teaching, this term in particular, pupils are currently making better progress in most classes and year groups. This includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged. Leaders are aware of which pupils are not making the necessary progress and have plans in place to address this. You are aware that it is critical for the improved progress to continue if pupils are to reach the targets set and make up for previous underachievement.

More-effective phonics teaching is resulting in pupils in Year 1 making more-rapid gains with their phonics skills so far this year. You have also placed an emphasis on encouraging pupils' reading throughout the school. The new library has been fondly received by pupils and competitions are encouraging regular reading. However, you acknowledge that the newly introduced book scheme is not yet established and some pupils are not placed on the right stage to support their reading development.

Pupils' books show increasing pride and care in the presentation of their work. A clear sequence of learning and the development of pupils' skills is evident throughout each unit of work in English and mathematics. In the most effective cases, it is clear how learning has been adapted to meet pupils' needs while supporting rapid progress to reach the expected standards. This is becoming more embedded in English, where the approach was implemented before it was in mathematics. When progress through a unit of work has not been as rapid, teaching has not always identified errors and misconceptions quickly enough to precisely meet pupils' needs.

Leaders have made sure that the new curriculum makes effective links between subjects. This allows pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding, both in the subject studied and in the development of basic English and mathematics skills. For example, pupils have a wide range of opportunities to explain and reason, use their reading comprehension skills and to write for a range

of purposes.

### **External support**

Continued strategic and operational support provided by the sponsor has been instrumental to the school's sustained improvement since the last monitoring visit. Ongoing support provided by the multi-academy trust's director of primary education and director of teaching and learning has enabled you to continue your focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning while developing leadership at all levels. Additional support from a local leader of education has meant that broader aspects of the school's work such as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are now under further review. You have taken full advantage of the range of training offered by the trust. This has contributed strongly to the development of middle and senior leadership. The multi-academy trust also ensures that support from trust leaders and consultants verifies the quality of the work of school leaders.