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28 September 2018

Ms Lucy Peberdy  
Headteacher  
Skipton Parish Church, Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Brougham Street  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 2ES

Dear Ms Peberdy

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Skipton Parish Church, Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11–12 September 2018, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2017.

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 local authority’s statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school’s improvement 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 chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children’s services for North Yorkshire. 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 February 2017.**

- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is rigorous and regular so that it provides a clear view of where support is urgently required and of the training needs of staff
  - making sure that the assessment of pupils' achievement is regularly and accurately documented so that all parents, teachers and leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of pupils' progress and attainment across the curriculum
  - using accurate assessment information to identify underachievement swiftly and provide the right support to meet underachieving pupils' needs
  - regularly evaluating the impact of actions implemented to strengthen the provision, especially for disadvantaged pupils, and making the necessary adjustments to the strategies to ensure they have a positive impact over time
  - developing the curriculum so that pupils have the chance to deepen their understanding across various subjects and to allow them regular opportunities to improve and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics
  - developing opportunities for pupils to see the correlation between showing respect and tolerance to people who make different lifestyle choices, or are from other faiths and cultures, and showing these values in their daily interactions with each other
  - compiling records which allow leaders to analyse information concerning unacceptable behaviour and bullying to see where there are patterns and ensure that such incidents reduce significantly.
- Urgently improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of all pupils, by:
  - ensuring that pupils always feel safe by listening to their concerns, and those of their parents, and acting on them effectively so that persistent aggressive behaviour and bullying is eradicated in school
  - ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations of pupils' conduct in all areas of school and at all times of the day.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching and, therefore, the rate of progress and levels of attainment of all groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, across the school, by:
  - making regular checks on what pupils can and cannot do in order to plan activities to meet their needs closely and which provide challenge so pupils

can reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics

- ensuring all teachers follow the school's policy and make effective use of the checks on pupils' work to ensure pupils know how to improve their work
- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should be able to do so that learning is more engaging, pupils work hard and disruptive behaviour is rare.

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 use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 11 September 2018 to 12 September 2018**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, the deputy headteacher, a range of other leaders, a group of pupils, a group of staff, the chair of the interim executive board, a representative of the local authority and two representatives of the diocese.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes to the school's staffing arrangements. You began your post as headteacher in September 2017, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. A local school closed at that time, leading to an influx of pupils, in September 2017, which resulted in the creation of an additional class. The school's leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities retired in July 2018. A new assistant headteacher who is also the leader for special educational needs provision has been appointed and began her post in September 2018. All of the teachers in Reception and key stage 1 are new to the school since the last inspection and there have also been some changes to key stage 2 staffing. An additional learning mentor, an advanced teaching assistant and two higher level teaching assistants have taken up post since the last inspection. Two members of staff have been given extra responsibility, one for the early years and one for behaviour for learning. An interim executive board was formed to improve governance arrangements.

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

The urgency with which leaders have responded to the special measures judgement has been hindered by the changes in leadership and turnover of staff. Support from the local authority, with an initial focus on safeguarding, was successful so that by the end of the summer term 2017, safeguarding was effective and remains so. The pace of improvement has started to pick up with new leadership appointments, eradication of the weakest teaching and the implementation of an interim executive board. Your strong and ambitious vision has been clear to staff and has created a new culture of higher expectations. You have built a team of staff who understand your vision, are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are keen to work together to make the required improvements.

A review of governance took place in May 2017 and governors have been determined to follow the recommendations in order to improve the effectiveness of the governing body. One of the first tasks was to form an interim executive board. This provided a streamlined and skilled governance model which is starting to have a more marked impact on school improvement. Critically, leadership capacity has been strengthened, the weakest teaching has been eliminated and leaders are

being effectively held to account for improving pupils' outcomes. A stable staffing team has now been established for September 2018. While this gives a secure base for improvement, governors recognise that with several teachers new to school this year, ensuring consistency in teaching approaches will be crucial. Governors are realistic about the work still to do in order for the school to exit special measures in a timely fashion. Their individual areas of responsibility and regular visits to school are supporting them in holding school leaders rigorously to account.

An external review of the use of pupil premium spending is due to take place next half term. This was not carried out with urgency following the previous inspection. However, due to the changes in leadership and an awareness that the previous strategy was not effective enough, it was decided to implement a new strategy first and then use the external review to evaluate its impact.

The school's improvement plan clearly sets out appropriate actions for improvement. You acknowledge that the success criteria would benefit from greater precision so that leaders and governors can gauge the impact of the actions on pupils' outcomes. Subject leaders have been supported to develop their own action plans. Again, these show a good understanding of the necessary improvements but tend to be action led rather than focused on the improvements leaders expect to see in pupils' outcomes.

Teachers have received effective support and development and have greater clarity about the expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. They value the professional development opportunities they have accessed through the teaching school alliance and feel they have become more reflective about the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. You and the deputy headteacher regularly make checks on the quality of teaching so you can identify where there are inconsistencies to address or if additional training is required. Additionally, you have made sure that teachers are held more rigorously to account for their pupils' outcomes through the appraisal system and pupil progress meetings.

Middle leadership is beginning to develop, following support from the teaching school alliance over the last academic year. At this point in time, leaders are not routinely involved in checking the quality of learning by observing lessons and giving feedback to staff. However, they have had some involvement in scrutinising the work in pupils' books and producing action plans for their subjects.

Leaders accept that while there has been an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching of English, the teaching of mathematics has only been given more recent attention. Furthermore, you recognise that the most critical next step for teaching is to develop a consistent approach for the teaching of phonics.

The new assessment system has begun to give leaders and teachers a more accurate picture of pupils' learning. The system supports teachers to check pupils' understanding throughout each unit of work in English and mathematics. It also

provides leaders with a snapshot of attainment and progress across the school at set points in time. The school's assessment information is now more reliable following partnership work with a local cluster of schools and with the support of the local authority. However, this has brought to light that previous assessments were often overly positive due to a lack of understanding about what should be achieved by the end of each year group. Now that staff are aware of the expectations for each year group, pupils' attainment appears to have declined quite sharply. You are acutely aware of the urgency required to ensure that an increasing proportion of pupils meet the age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Parents and carers are generally positive about the school and can see the improvements being made. They feel their children are happy and are making progress. Despite leaders valuing parents' involvement in the school's development, some parents feel that lines of communication could be improved further. You are aware of this and accept that, at present, methods of communication are in a period of transition as you move to a new approach.

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

While showing signs of improvement overall, the current quality of teaching is not where it needs to be to bring about rapid improvements to pupils' outcomes. Many teaching approaches are so new that it is too early to gauge their impact. Where approaches have been in place for longer, changes in staffing and lack of middle leadership capacity have limited their impact. However, a stable team of teachers and leaders is now in place and you are keen to develop greater consistency in the teaching approaches used for English and mathematics. For example, until now, there has been a lack of fidelity to one approach for teaching phonics and this has hindered pupils' early reading development.

Teachers are now much clearer about the expectations for each year group and have more useful information to use when checking pupils' starting points, identifying gaps in learning and planning their next steps. Nonetheless, some activities are not designed carefully enough and detract from the intended learning. Likewise, not all teachers have consistently high expectations about some of the basic skills in pupils' work. For example, teachers are not routinely pointing out when pupils do not form their letters correctly, keep their writing on the line or copy spellings carefully. This means that some work is not presented with as much pride and care as it should be.

You have introduced a new curriculum which is exciting pupils' interest in their learning. Parents appreciate being invited to school to share in their child's learning at the end of a unit of work. Home learning projects are igniting pupils' enthusiasm for what they are learning in class. The new curriculum is also contributing to pupils' improving attitudes towards their learning.

Teaching in the early years has begun well this year. Children appear happy and settled and are becoming aware of the class routines. The calm and nurturing approach from staff is effective in supporting children's social and emotional development. Effective questioning is used to check children's understanding, develop their thinking and as a model for how to use newly acquired vocabulary.

A new reading programme has supported teachers in establishing more accurate assessment of pupils' reading so that books are being more closely matched to pupils' reading development. In contrast though, when pupils are in the early stages of learning to read using phonics, the books they are reading do not match their phonics knowledge. This hinders their reading accuracy and prevents them from becoming confident to read fluently and with greater comprehension.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of English where each unit of work is centred around a high-quality book. Teachers have been supported to plan sequences of learning and there are more frequent opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. The impact of leaders' actions has varied due to the differing quality of teaching. However, pupils' stamina for writing has been a notable improvement.

Improvements in the teaching of mathematics have been slow to start but have begun in earnest this September. Leaders have introduced a new calculation policy and have implemented a range of systems and resources to support teachers in developing pupils' mathematical knowledge. It is too early to see the impact of the changes on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes in mathematics. However, staff feel well supported and have a clearer understanding of the expectations for planning, teaching and assessment.

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

There are considerable improvements in the way pupils conduct themselves around the school and in lessons. Pupils recognise the higher expectations of their behaviour and are clear about the behaviour system and how sanctions and rewards are applied. The improvements which were acknowledged at the monitoring inspection which took place in July 2017 have continued. Serious incidents have continued to diminish and pupils feel safe. Pupils' conduct has improved so much that leaders have been able to turn their attention to developing pupils' learning behaviours. Pupils welcome this as they are now more able to be reflective about their learning and know the importance of persevering and learning from their mistakes. Pupils are rewarded for demonstrating these dispositions in class and in assemblies.

Personalised support for vulnerable pupils with complex needs has also developed. The support for this group is beginning to reap rewards. As a result of the action taken, this group are increasingly displaying a readiness to learn and are beginning to take part in some learning with their peers more successfully.



Pupils are well occupied at break and lunchtimes. The staggered lunchtime has helped to give pupils more space and access to resources and is resulting in them engaging successfully in purposeful activity.

Pupils have a much more secure understanding of fundamental British values such as respect and tolerance. They demonstrate how they respect each other's differences and treat people how they expect to be treated themselves. Pupils enjoy making a contribution to the school, for example through the pupil forum and in the creation of the new school values.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Leaders have implemented a range of actions and identified appropriate priorities to improve pupils' outcomes. However, due to staffing changes and variability in the quality of teaching and learning, it is too early to see the impact in terms of pupils' attainment and progress.

The new assessment system is allowing leaders to more accurately track the progress of groups, for example of disadvantaged pupils. At pupil progress meetings, leaders and teachers work together to plan the support needed for pupils who are underachieving. This is still in the early stages. As yet, assessment information and work in pupils' books is not showing that progress is accelerating for most year groups, including for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, this is an urgent priority for leaders.

You are aware that teacher assessments at the end of the early years and key stage 1 have not been as accurate as they should have been in the past. You have acted quickly to address this urgent priority but as a result, pupils' outcomes appear to have rapidly declined. Not enough pupils are reaching the expected standards by the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few children reached a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2018. Pupils' phonics knowledge is also underdeveloped. These outcomes leave many pupils unprepared for the curriculum in their current year group and a legacy of underachievement means that they need to catch up quickly if they are to reach the expected standards.

Pupils are developing a keener interest in reading. The new reading resources are encouraging them to read more widely and often. Additionally, the new individual reading approach has provided encouraging improvements. Pupils in the Year 6 trial made an average of six months' progress in three months.

### **External support**

The diocese has worked closely in partnership with the local authority to support the school's improvement. Particular care has been taken to find the right academy

solution and the diocese is currently exploring the possibility of creating a local hub of schools to prevent this school from being geographically isolated from the schools it will be working in partnership with. External support from the local authority, diocese and through the local teaching school alliance has been successful in addressing many of the difficulties encountered since the school was placed in special measures. In particular, this has resulted in a more effective team of leaders and teachers who are committed to making the improvements needed for the removal of special measures. These developments are making sure that the school has increased capacity to continue its journey of improvement at a faster pace.