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Dear Mr Sargeant

Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints Church of England Academy

Following my visit with Gary Lewis, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 4 to 5 December 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 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 February 2017. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Exeter, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Northern

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2017.

- Urgently improve leadership and management at all levels, including the sixth form, by:
 - strengthening the governing body so that leaders are held fully to account for improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - ensuring that leaders and governors accurately evaluate all aspects of the school's work and use this evaluation to develop and implement effective planning for improvement
 - developing the skills of senior and middle leaders in improving the quality and impact of teaching to raise standards, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that attendance initiatives are embedded and rates of pupil absence fall.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that outcomes for pupils significantly improve across the curriculum, including in the sixth form, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve so that the standards of work and pupils' rates of progress over time are at least good
 - providing pupils with appropriately challenging work, especially for the most able pupils
 - making sure that pupils complete and present their work to a high standard
 - improving pupils' literacy skills, particularly the use of accurate spelling
 - consistently promoting pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning
 - ensuring that assessments of pupils' work are accurate and consistent
 - significantly improving outcomes for those studying level 2 courses in English and/or mathematics in the sixth form.

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

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 December 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and with other leaders. Discussions were also held with two governors and with the chief executive officer from the trust that is working in partnership with the school. Meetings were held with other staff and with groups of pupils, both formally and informally. Inspectors looked at learning in lessons across a range of subjects, including talking with pupils about their work and looking at how well staff are supporting improvements to pupils' behaviour. A separate sample of pupils' work from Year 11 was also scrutinised in order to consider the impact of improvements to teaching and the use of assessment. Inspectors also looked at the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, with a focus on the effectiveness of referrals made for pupils about whom there are concerns.

Context

Following a considerable period of turbulence, the school has been fully staffed since September 2018. There have been a large number of new appointments, including a new headteacher and five other members of the senior leadership team. Two new senior leaders are on fixed-term secondments from the trust that is supporting the school. In addition, there are five new heads of subject and one new head of year, with a further head of subject due to begin in January 2019. Overall, around two-thirds of the school staff have changed over the last two years. Heads of subject and most of the teaching staff are now subject specialist teachers. The school is also working closely with Reach Academy, Feltham, on a wide range of school improvement initiatives. The sixth form is expected to close at the end of the current academic year. Only around 50 Year 13 students who are completing their examination courses remain in the sixth form.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders are increasingly confident and assured. Their analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is accurate and incisive. Leaders are open and reflective and there is increasing capacity for further improvement. There is a clear, long-term vision for the future of the school. Leaders are mindful of the pace of change and are ensuring that this is manageable for staff so that implementation is effective. Importantly, leaders are not trying to change too much at once but are tackling the most important priorities rigorously and consistently.

There is more effective strategic leadership of many aspects of the school's work, especially pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the quality of teaching. Leaders are working hard to embed a more consistent approach to systems and processes so that these support, rather than inhibit, school improvement. Through the pastoral system, there is greater focus on pupils' personal, social and emotional

needs and how to help pupils to be more successful in school. Governance is increasingly effective. The 'joint committee', comprising members from the partner trust as well as existing governors, is rapidly developing its skills, influence and impact.

Accountability of leaders and staff at all levels has been simplified and clarified. Alongside this, leaders have introduced a strong focus on support and professional development for staff. Working with the trust and the partner school, leaders have implemented a wide-ranging coaching programme. This has been deliberately separated from appraisal to allow staff to reflect openly and honestly on their practice. In discussions with inspectors, staff commented on how much they appreciated the level of support that they receive.

Similarly, support and challenge for middle and subject leaders is helping them to have greater impact, particularly on teaching. Middle leaders value the more rigorous and consistent approach to line management and accountability. Through consultation and discussion, senior leaders have ensured both 'buy-in' and commitment from staff to the changes needed. Middle leaders are fully involved in improvements and are encouraged to innovate and adapt approaches in their subject areas. Senior and middle leaders undertake checks on teaching, and this is helping to secure accountability and consistency. However, these checks do not always focus enough on the quality of teaching and whether pupils are helped to learn well. Leaders' evaluations are more often to do with whether agreed features are happening, rather than assessing their impact on learning and how this could be improved.

There remains work to do to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leadership has been strengthened in both areas and a review of the use of pupil premium funding has led to important changes in how this money is spent. Strategies which had little impact last year have been discontinued and there is now a more considered approach to the use of this additional funding. Nevertheless, leaders have not yet developed a way of measuring the impact of all the planned approaches for this year. This weakens the impact of the governance and oversight of this funding. Similarly, leaders recognise that some pupils with SEND do not do as well as they could. They have improved the information that teachers have about pupils with SEND and have also commissioned an urgent external review of the quality of SEND provision.

Leaders have reviewed the range of subjects and courses to ensure that they serve the best interests of pupils. For example, in 2018, less than one third of pupils in Year 11 were entered for the Ebacc, and attainment was low. Owing to choices made in the past, the proportion completing an Ebacc programme is expected to fall further this year. However, changes to the curriculum for younger pupils mean that this figure is on track to rise to around 50% entering the Ebacc over the next two to three years. Leaders have also identified a group of pupils who find reading difficult.

They have provided phonics training for a small team of staff alongside age-appropriate resources. This programme, developed in conjunction with the school's partners, will begin next week.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders' actions to improve teaching are beginning to bear fruit. In part, this is a consequence of greater consistency and stability across the workforce. However, it is also the result of leaders' greater clarity about expectations and standards of teaching quality. Improvements to teaching have focused on how teachers' practice can be improved and on tackling instances of the weakest teaching. This has included improving the consistency of classroom routines and raising expectations of what pupils can produce and achieve. Sixth-form students say that their lessons have improved and that they now feel more confident about their examinations.

Teachers now take greater account of pupils' existing knowledge when planning lessons. Improvements in teachers' use of assessment mean that they tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions more effectively. There is a strong sense of the 'All Saints lesson' emerging. Pupils' attitudes and engagement are improving, and they say they appreciate the support that they receive in their lessons, which helps them to improve. Nevertheless, there remains work to do to fully establish these improvements across all subject areas. Similarly, some underachievement in the sixth form persists, although staff and leaders are working hard to provide students with the support they need.

Not as much progress has been made in improving the quality of the curriculum, particularly how subject content is organised to help pupils learn more effectively. Leaders have plans to work with partners to develop the quality of the curriculum. They recognise that, in some subjects, there is not enough clarity about how pupils will develop their knowledge and understanding, and the skills they need, over time. As a result, sometimes, pupils do not build well enough on what they already know because some of the important 'building blocks' are not fully secure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There have been important improvements to leadership of behaviour and attendance. There is now greater capacity and increased accountability for these aspects. Using information about behaviour and attendance has increased leaders' ability to work strategically. Behaviour, bullying and attendance records are rigorously kept and thoroughly analysed. Incidents that occur are usually followed up carefully and quickly.

Pupils' behaviour in school has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Most pupils are well-behaved and sociable. Generally, they are attentive and cooperative in lessons and there are few instances of unruly or boisterous behaviour around the school. Pupils respect each other and the school environment. The

school site is tidy and generally litter free.

The 'ready to learn' (RTL) approach has been reformed to ensure that it works more effectively. Pupils are now returned more quickly to lessons, and this has helped to reduce absences that are linked to referrals to RTL. Together with a significant reduction in the use of supply teachers and the introduction of clearer systems and more consistent use of sanctions, the RTL approach is now having a stronger impact on pupils' behaviour. For example, the number of fixed-term exclusions has halved in comparison to same period last year, and internal referrals to RTL have also declined significantly.

Overall attendance, although lower than the national average, is also improving. Persistent absence is falling across most groups of pupils and is around two percentage points lower than for the same period last year. Attendance is carefully checked and any absence followed up promptly. This has had a marked impact in some year groups. For example, overall attendance in Year 9 is better than the national average. Approaches used by staff in this year group are now being rolled out across the school.

Last year, 15 pupils who had been on the school's roll in Year 10 were not on roll at the end of Year 11. Of these, most had been transferred to other schools through 'managed-moves'. While inspectors were satisfied that decisions about changes to the school's roll were in the best interests of pupils, the school's records did not always provide detailed enough information about the decision-making process. This was particularly so in the very small number of cases where pupils moved to elective home education.

Tutorial time is usually used effectively. It provides a calm and productive start to the school day. Leaders recognise that careers education, advice and guidance has been very weak in the past. They are taking action to address this, including developing links with post-16 providers across the city. Arrangements for work experience are developing well. Students in the sixth form appreciate the help and support they receive about their future options and choices.

Outcomes for pupils

Published results for 2018 showed some encouraging signs of improvement. Although rates of progress remained below average in most areas, there were some notable gains. For example, progress in mathematics improved and there were some overall gains for disadvantaged pupils and for students in the sixth form. Almost all pupils completing Year 11 in 2018 moved on to employment, training or further education. By contrast, rates of progress for boys, for the most able and for pupils with SEND remained weak.

The achievement of pupils currently in the school reflects many of the same features. As a result of leaders' and teachers' higher expectations, standards and

progress across the school are rising. This is seen in the quality and consistency of pupils' work across a broad range of subjects. Pupils are showing greater pride and interest in their work. The feedback they receive is helping them to improve and to put right errors and misconceptions. A focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar is having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' written work in most subjects. There are now fewer examples of poor quality, incomplete or careless work. However, although there have been some improvements to leadership, the impact of provision for pupils with SEND remains weaker than for other pupils. Leaders have commissioned an external review of SEND provision early in the New Year.

External support

The school continues to benefit greatly from the support provided by its main partner, the Ted Wragg Trust. This support is very well considered and carefully targeted. There is a clear focus on building sustainable capacity for further improvement within the school. The trust is also ensuring more effective governance through the newly formed 'joint committee'. The trust has also brokered the support of Reach Academy, Feltham, which is providing valuable support for teaching, behaviour and the curriculum. In many respects, the approach to supporting the school is one from which other schools and trusts in similar circumstances could learn.