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Ms Imogen Woods
Interim executive headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Walworth
Penrose Street
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Dear Ms Woods

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Walworth

Following my visit to your school on 28 to 29 November 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 2018.

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 action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2018.

- Leaders and staff raise their aspirations for pupils' outcomes, particularly those of boys and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by making sure that:
 - teaching is matched to pupils' needs and supports them to make good gains in their skills and knowledge in all curriculum subjects
 - assessment information on pupils' outcomes is accurate
 - teachers use assessment information effectively to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning
 - the teaching of reading enables pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to read accurately and understand what they read
 - teaching supports pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling and routinely produce writing at the standard of which they are capable
 - all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are taught effectively and pupils deepen their understanding of key concepts
 - disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive the support they need to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders check that funding received specifically to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has a positive impact on their progress
 - the curriculum is well planned, and builds pupils' knowledge and understanding over time
 - leaders, including governors, evaluate the school's performance accurately
 - leaders check that their actions secure the necessary improvements to the school's overall effectiveness
 - leaders take timely and effective action to diminish any differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils
 - staff are held to account for the impact of their work on improving pupils' outcomes

- governors provide leaders with sufficient challenge and ensure that leaders prioritise their efforts where they are needed most.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by ensuring that teaching meets pupils' needs and motivates them to do their best.

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 28 November 2018 to 29 November 2018

Evidence

This first monitoring inspection focused on the effectiveness of leadership and management, and the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes. During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim executive headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and groups of teaching staff. The inspector also met with five members of the governing body and the school's improvement advisers from the local authority and diocese. The inspector visited lessons across all year groups, accompanied by school leaders. The inspector spoke to pupils formally in a group and informally during playtimes and spoke to some parents about their views. The inspector checked the school's single central record and safeguarding procedures. The inspector evaluated the quality of learning in a sample of pupils' books from across the school and scrutinised documents provided by the school.

Context

The headteacher at the time of the section 5 inspection resigned last term. The two deputy headteachers were responsible for the day-to-day running of the school in the absence of a headteacher. The diocese and local authority appointed an interim executive headteacher who joined the school in June 2018, working at the school three days per week. The school internally appointed a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) who took up post in September 2018. A new early years leader took up post at the start of this academic year. New middle leadership roles have been created with subject leaders in mathematics, reading and writing. The school has retained the majority of its teaching staff. Three new teachers have been appointed. The governing body at the time of the section 5 inspection is still in place, including the chair of governors. The school has sponsorship from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust and is in the process of converting to academy status. This is expected to be finalised by February 2019.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

From when she took up her role, the interim executive headteacher has been the driving force for improvements since the previous inspection. She has a clear vision for the school and has the experience, skills and capacity to put her plans into action. All members of the school community have welcomed her strong leadership and feel confident that the school can now move forward. The interim executive headteacher has enabled a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

School leaders are open and honest about the school's strengths and weaknesses. With support from the local authority and diocese, they have drawn up a comprehensive action plan to address the areas for improvement. This plan

identifies appropriate and timely actions. The positive impact of these actions is starting to show, but it is at an early stage. Staff understand the school's priorities well, welcome the changes that have taken place and value the support they receive.

Leadership roles have been restructured and refined, so that all leaders and managers are clear about their responsibilities. Monitoring systems are now in place and leaders have very clear guidelines about how to monitor different areas of the school effectively. Leaders understand the importance of continual review and regularly evaluate the impact of their actions. They monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning and have begun an extensive training programme to help improve standards across the school.

Middle leaders have received useful training from external consultants and are coached by senior leaders so that they can carry out their new roles well. They report to senior leaders regularly and are held accountable for their actions. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and understand the role they play in securing future improvements to the school. The newly appointed leader in early years is knowledgeable and ambitious. She has worked closely with the early years consultant to ensure that baseline assessments are accurate and acts promptly on advice.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is an ongoing area for improvement. The new SENCo has started to work on making sure that current pupils on the SEND register have been accurately identified. Teachers and teaching assistants are now aware of pupils' individual needs and more knowledgeable about how they can support them. The inclusion team works closely with external agencies and has plans to engage with more specialists to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Leaders have raised expectations, focusing initially on behaviour and conduct. Parents, carers, pupils and staff have noticed a significant difference in this area. Pupils are clear about how they are expected to behave, thanks to a consistent approach from staff. Pupils appreciate the rewards system and speak highly of their teachers. The school also has higher expectations with regard to punctuality. Parents are clear about this and have responded positively on the whole. The number of pupils arriving late to school has decreased as a result.

Following the pupil premium funding review, leaders are aware of the urgent need to improve support for disadvantaged pupils. They acknowledge that this funding was not used effectively. As a first step, leaders have identified the disadvantaged pupils in each class and made teaching staff aware. Leaders have started to think strategically about how this funding can be used. However, the proposed spending for pupil premium funding still needs sharper focus and more precise planning.

The recommended review of governance took place in June 2018. This concluded that governance was ineffective. Governors have had a 'wake-up call' and demonstrate commitment and resolve to do their best by the school. Governors are now aware of what their role entails. They have begun a training programme and receive coaching from school leaders to develop their understanding of the school's performance. More time is needed for governors to be fully effective in their roles. They are not yet in a position to hold leaders to account and provide rigorous challenge, but have been on a steep learning curve.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders are working with teaching staff to raise the standards of teaching. There are signs that this is having a positive impact. Timetables have been amended to ensure that pupils receive a consistent amount of time in each subject, no matter what class they are in. Teachers are more adept at planning work which is at an appropriate level, although too often lessons lack challenge, particularly for middle- and high-ability pupils. More work is needed to ensure that teaching is matched to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are now clear about their roles. They work more effectively with small groups or individual pupils with SEND.

Leaders have improved the assessment system to track pupils' progress more closely. Teachers now understand how to track the progress of their pupils and the next step will be using this information to inform planning. Extensive work with consultants and senior leaders has improved the accuracy of assessment. Teachers and leaders have attended moderation sessions with other schools to ensure that their judgements are correct.

Leaders and staff have identified significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills and staff are trying to bridge the gaps. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics. Pupils often spend too much time working through concepts that they already understand and are not moved on quickly in their learning. Teachers follow the prescribed scheme, which means that lessons are still focused on number work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their reasoning skills.

Leaders have given reading a higher profile across the school. Pupils are now expected to read at home more regularly and parents have been given some guidance on how to support their children with reading. At this stage, it is too early to see the impact of this. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about reading and say that they have to read higher-level texts than previously.

When writing is structured and modelled effectively, pupils can write well. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils' writing has particularly improved and pupils use increasingly sophisticated language. However, spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are frequently not addressed. Leaders are pleased that all staff now identify mistakes in pupils' work, but more work is needed to follow up and address pupils' misconceptions.

Classrooms are bright and welcoming environments, including in the early years. Displays promote learning across a range of subjects and pupils speak enthusiastically about what they have done in particular subjects. Leaders are planning to review the curriculum so that pupils are more engaged and motivated in their learning. In the early years, the outdoor provision is not so stimulating for children, and opportunities for some areas of learning, such as physical development, are limited.

Outcomes for pupils

While leaders have put in place a culture of higher expectations, this is not fully embedded. Leaders and staff need more time to raise expectations of what their pupils can do. A review of current pupils' work shows that too many pupils are working at a standard that is below what is expected for their age. The 2018 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 6 further declined and were well below national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Phonics outcomes improved in summer 2018 and are now in line with the national average. The early years team is working with key stage 1 staff to ensure that pupils' phonics skills are secure by the end of Year 1 to maintain this improvement in outcomes.

Generally, pupils in key stage 1 make better progress than those in key stage 2. Pupils' attainment at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 improved in 2018 and was in line with national averages. Work in current pupils' books confirms this. Teachers in key stage 2 are dealing with a legacy of underachievement and low aspirations.

External support

The local authority and diocese have given extensive support to the school since the February 2018 inspection. Together, they appointed the interim consultant headteacher from a school within the diocese to strengthen and stabilise leadership and management. Additional support has been provided from a range of external consultants, delivering training to staff to help improve the quality of teaching and learning. Links with schools have been established, in order to share good practice and broaden the knowledge of leaders and staff. The school has engaged well with this and shaped the support to maximise impact.