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10 July 2019

Mrs Margot Buller  
Interim Headteacher  
St Mary and St Giles Church of England School  
King George Crescent  
Stony Stratford  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK11 1EF

Dear Mrs Buller

**Special measures monitoring inspection of St Mary and St Giles Church of England School**

Following my visit with Mary Ellen McCarthy, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 26–27 June 2019, 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 2019.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not 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 governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Oxford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Milton Keynes. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2019.**

- Urgently review all aspects of safeguarding systems to ensure that:
  - reliable and accurate record-keeping enables all potential welfare and well-being concerns to be acted on promptly, appropriately and effectively
  - the single central record accurately records all appropriate checks have been made on staff, volunteers and governors to ensure that they can work with children
  - attendance, exclusions and behaviour records are fit for purpose.
- Improve governance, leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - comprehensive training supports leaders and governors in their roles, following a period where many have become deskilled
  - all staff have job descriptions for the roles that they undertake in the school
  - regular monitoring of teaching and performance management systems enables all staff to be held to account for the progress that pupils make
  - governors reliably monitor and evaluate safeguarding, risk assessment and recording systems
  - governors hold leaders to account to evaluate fully the impact of the pupil premium and sports premium
  - relationships with parents are strengthened to restore trust in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching across both sites by ensuring that teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations of pupils' progress and make effective use of assessment to improve their planning
  - consider what pupils know and can do, providing teaching that builds on their knowledge and understanding and matches their needs across the curriculum
  - deploy support staff effectively to improve pupils' outcomes, particularly those pupils with SEND
  - are aware of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils and plan learning to meet their needs
  - develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics
  - promote the development of reading and writing skills more effectively across the school.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent.

External reviews of governance and 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 first monitoring inspection on 26 to 27 June 2019**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, the governing body and representatives of the local authority and Diocese of Oxford to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and the local authority's statement of action were evaluated. Inspectors also considered the effectiveness and impact of the external reviews of governance and the school's use of pupil premium. Learning was observed in 17 lessons; some observations were carried out with senior leaders and there were discussions with pupils during this time.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a new interim headteacher has joined the school and is assisted by two interim deputy headteachers. Two teachers have left the school and a further four teachers will leave by the end of the summer term. Most of the governing body, including the chair, resigned following the previous inspection. The school is receiving on-site support on most days from local authority and diocesan officers. The school has recruited a permanent school business manager and a permanent site manager.

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

Since the previous inspection, interim leadership arrangements have slowed the improvement of the school. Leadership structures have been temporary, short-lived or are reliant on external support. The interim headteacher has provided much needed clarity and direction but has had to spend time addressing the significant weaknesses in the school. Appropriate plans for improvement are now firmly in place and understood by staff. However, these have not yet been fully enacted. The school's progress, particularly in the development of teaching, has been too slow.

Safeguarding arrangements have improved. The security of the site has been reviewed and developed. Staff have now been vetted properly and received the right training to ensure that they can identify and report risks. Leaders record and review the information they hold in a far more systematic way, and seek additional support from external agencies with greater urgency and efficiency. However, leaders need to record with greater clarity the actions they have taken in school when they have not reported concerns to the local authority.

In a short period of time, the new school business manager has identified and made the essential checks and alterations needed to ensure that the school is a safe place to play, learn and work. Checks on fire and electrical equipment are now up to date. In addition, improvements to the fabric of the site mean that any potentially dangerous equipment or structures are quickly identified and repaired or removed.

Middle leaders have clearer role descriptions and now understand what they are expected to lead on. However, they do not have sufficient capacity or receive the direction from senior staff in order to lead on teaching and learning in the school. As a result, standards have not improved with the rapidity required.

The quality of teaching has improved in some classes because teachers have worked to improve their own practice, learning from the development opportunities they have been provided with. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is not systematically monitored and, as a result, staff do not receive the feedback they need to improve further.

Leaders have developed clear plans to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are disadvantaged. These plans have been informed by the pupil premium review. However, these are in their infancy and much still needs to be done. While fit for purpose, these plans have not yet had an impact on the progress of these groups of pupils.

The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school and is challenging leaders to make improvements. The governors have used the external review of governance to its full effect. They have developed far more efficient procedures, which give them a real insight into the true performance of the school. They have prioritised the right things, ensuring that arrangements for safeguarding are improved. They make appropriate checks on leaders' assertions and commission external expertise when required. Their focus is now firmly on securing future leadership for the school by joining an appropriate academy sponsor.

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

Teachers are showing more consistent expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and their productivity. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising slowly. However, this is not routine across the school, meaning pupils do not receive consistently challenging work.

Relationships between staff and pupils remain variable. In some classes, pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and follow these to complete their tasks. In others, pupils do not listen carefully or the instructions given are too vague. On occasion, teachers do not challenge pupils when they are off-task.

A new curriculum has been developed, which will ensure that pupils' learning covers the full breadth of the national curriculum. In some classes, staff are thinking about how they can sequence and develop pupils' learning so that links can be made within and between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 study 'the deep blue sea' and consider the impact of humans and wildlife on coral reefs. However, staff do not routinely sequence or develop pupils' learning in a logical way, meaning that knowledge is not revisited and consolidated.

Staff in the early years know children well and provide them with a good level of care. Close liaison with families and support from other colleagues ensure that children's needs are quickly identified and addressed. Teachers promote children's early acquisition of language and encourage them to speak clearly. This was illustrated when Nursery children shared a spirited version of 'Five green bottles' with appropriate actions, which demonstrated their vocabulary and love of performance.

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

Behaviour in class remains inconsistent. In some classes, staff apply the new behaviour policy well and are keen to reward pupils for good behaviour. However, in other classes, pupils become disengaged and occasionally disrupt the learning of others. Behaviour management systems have been reviewed recently and new processes have been implemented. Leaders have not yet assessed the efficacy of this system and or used the information gleaned to identify areas of strength or weakness.

Leaders have reviewed the systems for tackling bullying in the school. Improved education for pupils and training for staff have ensured that the school takes a more robust approach when bullying is reported. This has led to a reduction in the number of bullying incidents reported. However, some parents remain dissatisfied with the school's work in this area. Leaders understand that it will take some time to regain the trust that has been lost due to the school's previous poor response to bullying.

Pupils' attendance is now logged more accurately. However, changes in staffing mean that the analysis of attendance and subsequent actions to support families are inconsistent. Furthermore, staff do not analyse how poor patterns of attendance affect particular groups of pupils. This has limited targeted action that would have helped the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Rates of absence and persistent absence remain too high.

Pupils are taught to look after themselves and each other. For instance, Year 5 pupils learned about puberty and wrote leaflets to their peers describing how to maintain good personal hygiene. Pupils report the odd fallout within friendships but note that everyone is welcome at the school, regardless of race, gender, belief or ability.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Pupils are able to calculate well and now possess a stronger understanding of number. Nevertheless, pupils do not routinely solve problems or reason mathematically. This means that they are ill equipped to use their mathematics in more complex situations.

Pupils' writing shows some signs of early improvement. They present their writing well and are showing greater stamina, meaning that they write more. However, few pupils write at the expected standard because they are unable to apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills at an age-appropriate level.

Pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is variable. While the content of the national curriculum is covered, there is not enough thought given to how pupils progress through each subject. Consequently, pupils do not build on their prior understanding in the foundation subjects as they move through the school.

### **External support**

The local authority and diocese have worked closely and aligned their efforts to help improve the school and safeguard pupils. Their work to improve the identification and recording of child-protection concerns has been rapid and closely monitored. Officers are now based on-site for the majority of the week, providing guidance and support for staff and leaders. As a result, the decline in the school's performance has been stemmed and the school's leadership now has access to swift and efficient support.