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Rebecca McManus
Headteacher
St Martin's C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School
Shady Bower
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Dear Mrs McManus

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Martin's C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 29 and 30 November 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in January 2023.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and governors the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also held a meeting with the early reading leader, spoke with you about support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with language needs, visited some lessons and reviewed governor planning documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as requiring special measures.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a deputy headteacher. It has made new arrangements to coordinate the provision for pupils with SEND. This first monitoring visit focused on how well leaders are implementing their plans for improvement and how well governors are holding them to account for these improvements.

The school's planning prioritises improvements to the quality of education. Work has started to ensure that a broad and ambitious curriculum is in place. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this new curriculum.

The school has raised its expectations of how quickly and successfully pupils learn to read. It has ensured that there are high-quality resources for the teaching of early reading. The school has started to use assessment to identify gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Staff who teach the early reading curriculum have received some professional development. This is beginning to improve the quality of phonics teaching. However, improvements in the early reading curriculum are still in their infancy. As a result, the curriculum is not yet having the intended impact on pupils.

The school is determined that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those pupils with SEND and those who need support with language and communication. It is beginning to assess pupils' needs and starting points more precisely. It uses external expertise when required and involves parents in the planning and reviewing of support. This work is beginning to ensure that pupils' needs are identified accurately and is starting to inform adaptations to teaching.

Governors have begun to hold leaders to account for some of their actions and priorities. For example, the school has put in place effective systems to ensure that pupils attend well. It has been tenacious in implementing strategies to reduce absence. Governors maintain strong oversight of attendance and continue to challenge leaders to reduce persistent absence. However, governors are not holding leaders sharply enough to account for improvements in the quality of education. They do not have sufficient insights into the impact of the school's curriculum. As a result, they are not assuring themselves that improvements are being made swiftly and effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

James Oldham
His Majesty's Inspector