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22 January 2008

Mrs H Dacey
The Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Primary School
Liverpool Grove
Walworth
London
SE17 2HH

Dear Mrs Dacey

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Anna Savva, Additional Inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 January 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory overall, but with important work still to be done on improving the school's systems for self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Diocese of Southwark and the Director of Children's Services for Southwark.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
HM Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 15 and 16 January 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other staff, the chair of governors, pupils and a representative from the local authority (LA). HMI spoke to the school's improvement partner (SIP) by telephone.

Context

The school roll and staffing have remained stable since the inspection. During the autumn term, the rector of the church to which the school is attached was elected as the new chair of governors.

Achievement and standards

The school's data indicates that pupils make steady progress in most classes. The 2007 national assessments showed an improvement in English and mathematics although pupils' progress was still below expectations. Reading standards are higher than those in writing and mathematics, although the introduction of 'Writing Workshop' has begun to make some positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing. The school has recently introduced assessments for Year 3 to provide additional evidence for future years. There has been some improvement in the level of challenge given to higher attaining pupils, though inconsistencies remain and, as a result, the progress made by these pupils is variable.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2007:

- Raise standards in mathematics across the school and in English in Years 3 to 6 – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their attitudes to learning and behaviour, continue to be unfailingly good. They are polite, friendly and keen to discuss their work and learning. The school's consistent systems for behaviour management support this but just as important are the positive and caring approaches adopted by staff. Attendance remains satisfactory. The school is a strong community, underpinned by inclusive Christian values. In acts of worship, including an outstanding one led by the pupils themselves in the beautiful nearby church, all pupils join in well. They enjoy the simple but meaningful liturgy, and think sincerely about issues such as the gifts they each have to share with others. Pupils are very clear that these regular opportunities for spiritual reflection and prayer significantly enrich their school life and help them to learn.

Quality of provision

Teaching has improved where there has been specific support for individual teachers but there remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning both across the school and between lessons in the same class. Teachers present most lessons in a lively and enjoyable style, which engages pupils. Some lessons are well paced, but not all. The warm relationships between staff and pupils promote good behaviour. Staff are beginning to use the school's improving assessment data in some lessons to provide work that more closely matched the needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils report that they now often find their work more challenging. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' planning show that that whilst practice is improving, it is not consistent. Too often, the specific needs of groups of pupils, or individuals, are not clearly enough identified or addressed. All pupils do exactly the same work too much of the time.

Some better marking, improved staff evaluations of each lesson and the use of individual targets for each pupil are helping increase progress. Pupils say that they find the feedback they receive from staff helpful and are able to explain how they are being supported to achieve their targets. Strategies are also starting to be used to involve pupils in self-evaluation at the end of lessons. For example, pupils referred positively to the 'two stars and a wish' system which has had some constructive impact, but is not applied equally well in all lessons. In some cases using this system, pupils come up with general comments which are not specific enough to help them improve their work.

The curriculum is well supported by visits out of school. Pupils' work and displays reflect a strong emphasis on spiritual development which enhances the positive relationships in the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2007:

- Enable teachers to make better use of assessment and marking in tracking all pupils' progress and in setting them work at the appropriate level of challenge, especially for higher ability pupils – satisfactory

Leadership and management

The headteacher and all staff work well together, with considerable success, to create a positive environment in which children learn happily and thrive. Senior staff understand well the main issues and challenges that the school faces. They monitor the school regularly through, for example, lesson observations and looking at pupils' work. They also work hard to support the development of individual staff, especially those new to the profession or school. Since the inspection, the system for tracking the progress of each pupil has improved.

However, all this hard work does not translate well enough into robust overall school self-evaluation. In other words, the school is not using information from its monitoring to write down precisely and unequivocally its most significant overall strengths and improvement priorities. As a consequence, the school is trying to do too much in a somewhat disjointed way, without being sure enough what the key

strategic priorities should be. The school improvement plan, and associated documents, are unwieldy. The school cannot always say with sufficient clarity what has been achieved by the pupils as a result of all the hard work that is certainly going on.

The school needs to put this right, so that it can demonstrate better its capacity to improve. In discussions, the headteacher and chair of governors showed themselves to be aware of this and considering carefully the next steps. The chair of governors provides good pastoral support in the school, as well as useful insight into the issues needing further improvement. The new governors' school improvement committee, which meets weekly to consider the progress of the school, is a positive innovation.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2007:

- Senior leaders and governors must make more effective use of self-evaluation in analysing areas of weakness, planning to improve them and monitoring the progress towards agreed measures of success – inadequate progress but with some positive signs.

External support

The local authority (LA) provides satisfactory support to the school. Its statement of action meets requirements and is making a difference. For example, LA consultants have worked usefully with some teachers to improve practice further. The link adviser provides experienced and wise advice and is ready to work more closely with the school in improving the self-evaluation and school improvement planning processes. The school's improvement partner (SIP) visited the school three times during the autumn. His is a new role and, as yet, his reports and comments, whilst being encouraging, are not thorough or challenging enough to help improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Establish a more coherent, sharp and robust system for school self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Improve the use of the school's assessment data in planning and lessons to match work more closely to pupils' needs and further improve their progress.