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James Kelly
Acting Headteacher
St Andrew and St Francis CofE Primary School
Belton Road
London
NW2 5PE

Dear Mr Kelly

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Andrew and St Francis CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2014, 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 which 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 which took place in February 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher from a partner school, teachers and teaching assistants. Discussions also took place with five members of the executive governing body, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. The local authority's statement of action and the school's post-Ofsted improvement plan were evaluated. A brief visit was made to some classrooms to observe learning. The school's records of checks made on new staff were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, the headteacher has left the school. The deputy headteacher has taken on the position of acting headteacher. The executive headteacher of John Keble C of E Primary School, a local school judged as good by Ofsted, supports the school. A seconded deputy headteacher from St Peter's Eaton Square, a primary school in Westminster judged as outstanding by Ofsted, has taken on the temporary position of associate headteacher. The senior leadership team was dissolved in

March. One teacher retired in April and seven will leave the school in August. Two assistant headteachers and one Nursery teacher will join the school in September. There are still three teaching posts that remain unfilled. The governing body was dissolved in March and replaced in April with a smaller, more-focused, permanent executive governing body. The local authority and the London Diocesan Board of Schools (LDBS) have sourced the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The Department for Education visited the school in May and is currently holding discussions with the local authority and the LDBS regarding the school's status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority's statement of action does not propose specific actions for all aspects of the areas for improvement identified in the recent section 5 inspection. Actions to improve leadership, including senior leader training and the external review of governance, are not scheduled to take place early enough. The statement is clear about when particular actions are to take place. However, it is sometimes unclear if timings refer to when a task is completed or when success will be evaluated. There are no actions planned beyond 2015, and too many are unrealistically scheduled to achieve success in summer 2014. The plan is too vague about how some actions will be monitored. Though the local authority is clear when or how success will be evaluated, this is not reflected precisely enough in the plan.

The school drew up its post-Ofsted action plan in April. The plan makes reference to all of the areas for improvement, but proposed actions do not focus sufficiently on crucial aspects. For example, the monitoring of the achievement of different pupil groups, including measurable steps towards agreed tight timescales and developing year group leaders' involvement of improvements to achievement, are not clearly considered. The plan does not ensure that success criteria are clearly linked to time-specific outcomes which can be easily measured. Leaders recognise this is a barrier to effective monitoring and evaluation. Some leaders are monitoring the effectiveness of their own work because some actions are carried out, monitored and evaluated by the same person. While the plan pays careful attention to when specific actions will take place, a significant weakness is that it does not look beyond 2014.

The external review of governance has not taken place. Governors and leaders have not considered the advantages of conducting the review soon after the newly formed executive governing body was established. This is surprising, given that the majority of governors were members of the previous governing body. Despite this, the new executive governing body shows the capacity to secure improvement. For example, led by a national leader of governance, governors have begun to develop their knowledge of achievement, teaching and the views of parents and carers at the school. Governors now understand the benefits of pursuing the external review with some urgency. The external review of the pupil premium has also been delayed and

is due for completion by the end of June. Leaders and governors are eager to ensure the findings of the review support their use of funding from September onwards.

Leaders are beginning to take action to improve the quality of teaching. For example, teachers and teaching assistants have been guided by leaders and staff from John Keble School about challenging the most able and improving their marking. They have also considered their roles in supporting children with special educational needs. Frequent and exacting checks are being used to evaluate the standard of teaching and to inform further training. A review of the school's use of assessment has been undertaken. Newly introduced half-termly assessments are beginning to provide leaders with a better picture of which pupils are not making the expected progress. Leaders acknowledge that pupils' targets must be more challenging and that teachers' assessment of pupils must be more accurate. There has been a review of the curriculum involving all leaders and teachers. Consequently, teachers have contributed to designing a new 'afternoon curriculum' so that subjects other than English and mathematics will be considered in greater depth. Leaders are ready to implement and monitor the impact of the new curriculum from September.

The local authority and LDBS identified the need for a 'rapid improvement group' shortly before the inspection. Their monitoring and challenge has continued to offer critical support to leaders reviews of standards across the school.

Following the monitoring inspection these judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

Following my visit, I recommend that the external review of the pupil premium is completed and the external review of governance is undertaken as a matter of urgency. The weaknesses in the local authority statement of action and the school's post-Ofsted improvement plan should be addressed by 1 September 2014.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Brent and the Diocese of London. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector