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26 January 2015

Ms Alison Loffler
Executive Headteacher
St Andrew and St Francis CofE Primary School
Belton Road
London
NW2 5PE

Dear Ms Loffler

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

Following my visit with Gill Walley, Additional Inspector and Fiona Judge, Associate Inspector to your school on 20–21 January 2015, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Brent and the Diocese of London.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014

- Improve teaching and raise achievement in English and mathematics, especially in writing, so that both are at least good, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use methods, ask questions and provide activities that challenge the more able pupils and make them think harder
 - making sure all teachers plan lessons that take account of the targets for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are given the necessary training and support so that they are more effective in lessons
 - checking carefully that marking provides useful guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and that this advice is acted upon.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management, including the ability of the governing body to hold the school to account, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have higher expectations of how well pupils achieve in their classes
 - ensuring that assessment information is collected more frequently, analysed more thoroughly and used to provide a more realistic evaluation of the school's performance
 - monitoring more closely the achievement of different groups of pupils in order to put action in place more swiftly if underachievement is identified
 - creating clear, measurable steps in improvement plans to show how well the school is progressing
 - ensuring that year-group leaders contribute fully to improvements by extending their skills in understanding and using information about pupils' progress.
- Re-organise the way subjects other than English and mathematics are taught so that pupils can study them in greater depth.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - improving its skills in holding the school to account for its performance
 - ensuring governors receive training in the interpretation of data
 - increasing its involvement in evaluating the work of the school and setting future goals
 - ensuring it plays a full part in monitoring the expenditure of the sports funding and the pupil premium.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance 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 and governance may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 20–21 January 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, groups of pupils and some parents. Discussions were held with members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and representatives from the local authority and the London Diocesan Board of Schools (LDBS).

Context

Governors appointed an interim headteacher in November 2014. They have begun the process to appoint a substantive headteacher ready to take up post in September 2015. Three teachers have left the school since October. Three teachers have joined, including those with class responsibilities for Year 3, Year 5 and cross-phase religious studies. Early Years Foundation Stage classes are being taught by a long-term supply teacher and a teaching assistant because of staff absence. The Interim Executive Board was constituted in November 2014. A one-month consultation about the possibility of converting to academy status commenced on 23 January 2015.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Despite staff absence, standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved. More children are reaching the level of development expected for their age. This is because a significant proportion are beginning to make more rapid progress in literacy and mathematics. Tracking shows that children are also making faster progress in other areas of development. For example, more children are demonstrating they can manage their feelings in line with age-related expectations.

Children are also beginning to make more rapid progress in Key Stage 1. School data indicate that at current rates pupils are likely to make better than average progress each year in reading, writing and mathematics. Termly assessments confirm that gaps between groups, which have previously been seen with older children, are no longer present. For example, boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are making very similar levels of good progress.

The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 has stabilised. Tracking systems show that in most cases, pupils are on track to make at least average progress in reading, writing and mathematics over two years. However, this is not consistently the case in every year group or subject. Leaders acknowledge that some pupils need to make faster progress to redress the shortfall in previous achievement. For example, the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make notably less progress in reading, writing or mathematics depending on which year group they are in.

Careful tracking and subsequent intervention are having a positive impact on the gaps that exist in the progress of different groups of pupils in Key Stage 2. In most cases, gaps between the progress of boys and girls, and gaps between the progress of those with special educational needs and others have stopped widening and, in places, are beginning to reduce. The gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others are no longer widening in Years 5 and 6. However, disadvantaged pupils are falling further behind others in Years 3 and 4. Leaders' new systems of tracking and intervention have ensured these gaps are now being identified earlier and recent support is focused correctly on tackling these.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving. More teachers are demonstrating increased levels of confidence in planning activities that challenge pupils of different abilities. Pupils are making the most progress when teachers challenge them right from the start of lessons. Where this is most successful, it is supported by carefully considered and well-timed questioning which ensures that challenge is sustained during lessons and helps pupils to develop their ideas and reasoning. However, some teachers are not able to achieve this consistently because they are not wholly confident in some aspects of their subject knowledge. Occasionally, this causes some attempts to cater for different abilities to lose focus on the learning aims.

Teachers have increasingly high expectations of how pupils should behave and what they are capable of. In the vast majority of cases, daily routines and practices promote good attitudes to learning and are having a positive impact. For example, in daily reading time, children are responding very positively to well-established practices and are making good gains in their reading skills. The teaching of topics in the afternoon is also more focused. Teachers are beginning to ensure that the sound routines in the teaching of English and mathematics are being used to raise expectations of behaviour and achievement at other times of the day. Teaching is providing better opportunities for pupils to apply and develop literacy and mathematics skills while also acquiring deeper knowledge in other subjects.

Some teachers have developed the confidence to plan opportunities for pupils to explore the natural links between topics. This is sometimes supported by the use of engaging questioning that promotes and assesses pupils' understanding of the bigger picture. However, these opportunities are not taken by enough teachers. This is because teachers and teaching assistants do not always make good use of opportunities to assess pupils' learning in the lesson. For example, when asking questions or using mini-whiteboards, they do not focus enough on checking the depth of pupils' understanding of key concepts.

Teachers' marking is more consistent and more pupils are regularly using it to make improvements to their work. Pupils are beginning to make use of equally good guidance from teachers in their topic work. Occasionally, the standard of marking is not good enough to give pupils the information they need to improve. A small

number of pupils have still not established good routines of correcting or improving their work.

Some teaching assistants are guided to undertake specific roles so that small groups of pupils are supported at the level they require. This is helping some more able and some less able pupils to make more rapid progress. However, too often it is not clear what is expected of some teaching assistants in lessons, and as a result, pupils who would benefit the most from direct support do not always get the attention they require.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The attendance of pupils continues to improve. School records show that in 2014/15, overall absence and persistent absence are lower than the national average. Leaders' strategies to raise awareness among parents, alongside incentives for pupils to attend and continued effective use of other agencies, have all contributed to these improvements.

Leaders have taken decisive action in response to the concerns raised about safeguarding during the last visit. Four senior leaders are now trained at the higher level to manage child protection concerns. Safeguarding referrals made during 2014/15 have been reviewed to ensure that correct practice was followed and appropriate responses were made. Teachers have received updated training on the processes for safeguarding and child protection. They express confidence about their role and understand who they should make referrals to. A member of the IEB has been given specific oversight of safeguarding and regular checks on key safeguarding practices are standing items at IEB meetings.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The interim headteacher has added much needed capacity to the senior leadership team. Senior and middle leadership has been restructured to better match leaders' skills and expertise to areas of the school. Staff and parents appreciate the greater clarity of communication which this has brought about. Staff morale has improved and staff express renewed confidence in leaders' capacity to offer the support and development they need. Teachers and middle leaders feel increasingly empowered to develop new approaches in their work.

Support, coaching and mentoring are continuing to build and strengthen senior leaders' capacity. Consequently they now monitor teaching and achievement rigorously and accurately. Senior leaders' use of lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny are well established and identify teachers' individual areas for development. Monitoring cycles have been extended to evaluate the recently developed afternoon curriculum. Leaders recognise that occasionally monitoring lacks the rigour to offer high quality developmental advice. Assessment and tracking systems are now robust and accurate enough to support many aspects of

improvement. For example, intervention and support mechanisms, pupil progress meetings with teachers, and strategic leadership meetings are all benefitting from termly pupil progress updates.

The recent restructuring of the line management of middle leaders has been matched to senior leaders' areas of expertise. Consequently, senior leaders are beginning to develop the leadership roles of middle leaders. Subject, area and phase leaders have been supported to develop focused action plans informed by rigorous audits. However, the development of middle leaders' accountability roles is very recent and it is too early to evaluate its impact.

The IEB has wasted no time in understanding the school's priorities. The board has established very good working relationships with senior leaders and the Rapid Improvement Group (RIG). Board members are making very effective use of regular meetings to ensure they have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the school's work. They are making good use of their expertise to offer leaders high-level challenge. Plans to consult about the possible change to academy status are thorough and ably assisted by the LDBS. The IEB has ensured that considerations about the school's future status have not impeded its own or school leaders' focus on improving teaching and achievement.

External support

Leaders and teachers continue to receive good quality support from John Keble Church of England Primary School in Brent. Modelling and coaching from strong practitioners are helping teachers to teach with greater confidence, variation and focus. Senior and middle leadership skills are developing as a result of targeted mentoring from this school.

The local authority and the LDBS continue to take the lead role in the RIG, which is focused on sharpening leaders' monitoring and accountability skills. Leaders are increasingly undertaking monitoring in more depth as a result of challenge that these meetings offer. Leaders are also receiving measured support. For example, as a result of recent meetings, the local authority identified and secured advice for the school through English, mathematics, special educational needs and curriculum consultants. Middle and senior continue to improve their day-to-day monitoring of teaching by regularly working alongside experienced advisors from the local authority. The LDBS's consistently strong interrogation of school tracking systems has contributed to the current robust and detailed information about pupils' progress.