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27 April 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
Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit with Fiona Judge, associate inspector to your school on 23–24 April 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 fourth 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 appoint up to two newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. They should be deployed to year groups where consistently good or better teaching is already evident.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 23–24 April 2015

Evidence

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

Context

The interim headteacher appointed in November 2014 left in February 2015. The IEB has acted swiftly to appoint a new interim headteacher who took up post in February 2015. The process to appoint a substantive headteacher for September 2015 is nearing completion. Three teachers have left the school since January. Leaders have begun the process to appoint new teachers to Reception, Year 3 and Year 6 classes which are currently being taught by supply teachers. The academy consultation ended on 23 February 2015 and the IEB anticipates that the school will become part of the LDBS Academy Trust on 1 June 2015. Industrial action against the academy proposal has taken place on three for a total of four days occasions since the last monitoring inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes continue to make better progress. More children are on course to reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. A wide range of daily activities is ensuring that children receive a good balance of mathematics, literacy and other opportunities to learn.

Overall, pupils in Key Stage 1 are making more progress than previously seen. School data show that in the last term, the overall progress in Years 1 and 2 is rapid and consequently, many pupils are on track to attain higher outcomes than expected. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils that are not making enough progress continues to fall and is now relatively low.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. On average, pupils in all year groups are making at least the progress that should be expected over the last term, and where the teaching is strongest, pupils' progress has accelerated beyond expectations. However, this improving picture masks lower rates of progress made by some pupils. Across all year groups, there remain too many pupils who are not making enough progress to attain in line with the end of key stage expectations. This is particularly evident in writing, and in some year groups it also applies to reading and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is still a priority for improvement. Pupils in Key Stage 2 with special educational needs are now making better progress and the wide gaps in attainment have started to narrow. The progress of those in Key Stage 1 has slowed and in particular, some gaps are beginning to emerge in Year 2 between the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and others.

The quality of teaching

Improvements to teaching are variable. Where teaching was previously seen to be strongest, it continues to improve. However, not all teaching is improving quickly enough. This is because some teachers are making gains in their knowledge and skills but are not always able to sustain those improvements over time. Consequently, while some teachers are able to adapt activities and instructions so that work challenges pupils well, others are still giving work to pupils too often that does not take enough account of what they can already do.

Some teachers are showing the confidence to develop new approaches to help pupils learn better. For example, opportunities to get pupils to review their own written work against specific criteria are increasingly evident over time. This is helping pupils, for example, to focus on which features of writing they have included or omitted in their work. Similarly, some teachers are working to develop new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. For example, teachers are seeking to give pupils opportunities to develop their conceptual understanding or learn through exploration. Such improvements are at an early stage and as a result, do not always result in high quality learning for all pupils. Importantly, in these cases, teachers remain determined to identify what they can do to further improve.

The teaching of writing is improving but still needs further development. Teachers are seeking to include activities where pupils can generate their own ideas about a particular theme before writing them down. This includes high quality discussion across the whole class or between individual pupils and teachers, which helps pupils to formulate good quality written responses. However, these opportunities are not taken by all teachers. Questioning is not always focused enough on developing the knowledge and understanding required to approach written tasks with confidence. In some cases, not enough is done to bridge the gap between developing pupils' ideas and getting them to produce appropriate good quality written responses.

Some pupils are receiving better individual support from teachers and teaching assistants. Some teachers are more likely to re-direct teaching assistants during lessons as pupils' needs arise. Where it is more effective, teaching assistants use high quality questioning to assess and tease-out pupils' understanding. However, this is not consistent practice. Not all teachers give enough guidance to teaching assistants for them to assess and support learning effectively. Some teaching assistants still need to develop more effective approaches to manage their time so they can support more pupils.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work remains consistently good. Some teachers are using their assessment of pupils' work to plan opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. However, this is not evident in all teaching and still needs developing to ensure that opportunities are relevant for all pupils. Furthermore, most pupils are still not demonstrating how they are using their teacher's feedback to help them improve their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attendance has improved further. Current attendance figures show that compared with a similar period of time in 2014, there has been a significant reduction in overall absence rates. Overall absence and persistent absence figures are on track to be significantly lower than national averages because of leaders' continued work to promote individual and class attendance.

Pupils' attitudes to learning remain consistently good and the vast majority of pupils behave well outside of lessons. However, leaders have identified that there is work to be done to ensure that all pupils conduct themselves appropriately at playtime and lunchtime. Recent work to improve midday supervisors' behaviour management skills has begun to reduce instances of poor conduct reported to the interim headteacher.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher and senior leaders have maintained their focus on school improvement during the proposed conversion to an academy. The interim headteacher has quickly developed a thorough understanding of the school's immediate priorities. Checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress remain rigorous and frequent. These checks continue to provide leaders with an accurate picture of where improvements are still necessary. Consequently, leaders have a clear understanding of where teaching is improving and where further challenge is required because improvements are not being sustained. Leaders' drive and determination have ensured that as teaching improves so too have their expectations of what teachers and pupils can achieve.

Senior leadership capacity continues to strengthen. The vast majority of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is now undertaken by senior leaders. They provide teachers with good quality feedback about how to improve. Subject leaders are engaging positively with the senior leaders' strategy to develop middle leadership. Leaders of English and mathematics are working closely with senior leaders on carefully chosen monitoring activities to improve their subjects. Other middle leaders are developing a growing awareness of what is required to lead their areas well because of targeted coaching and support provided by senior leaders.

Leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress is leading to better quality discussions with teachers to identify those pupils who are not making enough progress. Teachers and middle leaders speak highly of a new approach to teachers' planning because it is beginning to challenge them to focus more on the needs of these pupils. Leaders have supplemented this focus with fixed-term intervention classes to support the learning of specific pupils.

The IEB's strategy to ensure that leaders remain focused on school improvement during the proposed academy conversion is highly successful. The Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) has remained in place so that members of the IEB can continue to hold leaders to account more. Senior leaders share a wide range of information about teaching and achievement and respond increasingly well to challenge about the impact of their actions. Consequently, members of the IEB convey a very good understanding of the current impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. IEB meetings are appropriately scheduled between RIG meetings to focus on the wider administrative issues such as the proposed academy conversion, challenging poor staff attendance and strengthening communication with parents.

Leaders have taken all available steps to ensure that the school has remained open to as many pupils as possible during recent industrial action.

External support

Teachers on support plans are benefiting from working closely with very skilled teachers from John Keble Church of England Primary School in Brent. Shared planning in the early years is contributing to improvements in provision and outcomes. Subject leaders' development is being well supported by opportunities to shadow effective counterparts at John Keble School.

The local authority has worked with senior leaders to develop teaching by improving teachers' moderation of pupils' work, successfully supporting teachers in the early years, and more recently, beginning to develop teachers' awareness of support for pupils with special educational needs. Alongside the LDBS, the local authority is ensuring senior leaders are increasingly challenged through IEB and RIG forums. The LDBS and the local authority are ensuring that challenge remains sharp. The LDBS's work with senior leaders has strengthened leaders' and teachers' understanding of information about pupils' progress. In partnership with the associate headteacher, the LDBS has ensured that all teachers clearly understand which aspects of pupil progress indicate that the school has not yet done enough to come out of special measures. The LDBS has worked closely with the IEB during the ongoing process to recruit a substantive headteacher.