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14 December 2012

Mr Terry Bennett
The Interim Executive Headteacher
St John's Church of England Primary School
Peel Grove
Bethnal Green
London
E2 9LR

Dear Mr Bennett

Special measures monitoring inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 2012, 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 September 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, the temporary Chair of the Governing Body, two representatives from the local authority and two representatives from the Diocese. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

The interim executive headteacher was appointed in October 2012 after the resignation of the former headteacher. He is the headteacher of a good local school which has now become St John's partner school. Following the resignation of the governing body, the local authority appointed new governors who have taken on the responsibilities of governance.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school's raising attainment plan clearly links actions to all areas for improvement from the last inspection. Senior leaders responsible for each action have been included in the plan, although the person ultimately responsible for monitoring key actions is missing. The interim executive headteacher has put in place some good actions to improve pupils' learning environment and to support subject improvements. Some of these points are additional to the areas for improvements but are necessary to provide a stable structure for school improvement to commence. Staff say they have been given good support and training to improve some aspects of their teaching of literacy and checking on pupils' progress. The significant support from the local authority has resulted in improvements in phonics and the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' writing. Support has been planned for teachers to improve the teaching of mathematics, although this has not yet started. Responsibilities of the senior leadership team in literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage have been identified. The partner school has contributed well to the support of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator. However, further support is needed so that they can undertake their roles effectively.

Improving teaching is being given the highest priority and lesson observations have been carried out. The result of these observations will act as a baseline to judge the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. However, leaders are yet to implement plans to improve the practice of individual teachers. Individual training needs and targets have yet to be set. This aspect requires an increased sense of urgency. The work with the partner school has given teachers an opportunity to observe stronger literacy lessons, which is beginning to help them develop their teaching in this subject. However, this work is still in its infancy. The temporary Chair of the Governing Body is knowledgeable of the main areas that need to be addressed by school leaders. Although there are ongoing informal discussions, the pace of the work of the current governors has been too slow. The local authority expects to apply to the Secretary of State for permission to appoint an interim executive board in the New Year. A meeting with representatives from the local authority and parents and carers has been undertaken. Parents and carers are being kept informed of changes by a weekly newsletter. A parent forum will commence in the spring term.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

- The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.
- The school's action plans are fit for purpose.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector