



## Elsecar Holy Trinity C.E (VA) Primary School

Our School, Our Church, Our Community

Church Street, Elsecar, Barnsley, S74 8HS

01226 743008

Email : [j.spensley@elsecar.org](mailto:j.spensley@elsecar.org)

Executive Headteacher: Mr I Goddard

Head of School: Miss A Charity

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I write on behalf of the Elsecar Holy Trinity CE Primary School Head of School, the Executive Head and the Interim Executive Board (IEB).

As you are probably aware, Ofsted HMI visited the school on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 for the fourth HMI monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in February 2014 and I attach for you the report from the HMI monitoring visit that was published to us today. You will be able to read where the school has improved further and where we will continue to concentrate our efforts to further improve the school. You will also be able to note that the school continues to make 'reasonable progress', which means we are improving at the rate HMI expect us to. HMI confirmed that the Senior Leadership Team and IEB continue to be focused on the right priorities, are improving the right aspects of the school in the right order and that we have an extremely good knowledge of the schools strengths and areas to develop further (which we had already included in the schools development plan). This continues to be good news for your children and for the staff of the school.

Our work with the Department for Education (DfE), the Local Authority (LA), Sheffield Diocese and the PRIDE Multi Academy Trust has continued throughout this term in the process of becoming a sponsored Academy. There have been a number of 'technical and legal' holdups, which have unfortunately delayed the conversion process, the majority of these being out of the control of the sponsoring trust. We are now expecting the school to become a sponsored Academy as part of PRIDE Multi Academy Trust on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 if all the barriers we are facing have been successfully dealt with.

When the school converts to become an Academy, the Interim Executive Board (IEB) will stand down. PRIDE Multi Academy Trust will then begin to appoint a new Local Governing Body for the school. I am sure that Mr Goddard and the directors of the Trust will keep you fully informed of the process in the Autumn term.

Finally, on behalf of all at the school, I would like to thank you for your continuing help, support and understanding. Your children have been superb, working hard and living up to the high expectations placed upon them. Standards of children's achievement are rising and the school continues to grow stronger and to improve further. In addition, we look forward to welcoming Nick Peace to join the teaching and leadership team in September.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your children an enjoyable, and well-earned, summer break.

Yours sincerely,

*Wil Andrews*

Wil Andrews

Chair, Elsecar Holy Trinity CE Primary School Interim Executive Board

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

**Direct T** 01695 566 855

**Direct F** 01695 729 320

**Direct email:** gnewton@cfbt.com



9 July 2015

Miss A Charity  
Headteacher

Elsecar Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Church Street

Elsecar

Barnsley

South Yorkshire

S74 8HS

Dear Miss Charity

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Elsecar Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit with Suzanne Lithgow Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 7 and 8 July 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 from 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Barnsley and the Diocese of Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

## Annex

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

- Improve teaching across the school, so all is at least good and all groups of pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
  - pupils do not spend unnecessary time working through easier work before moving on to more challenging activities
  - teachers question pupils to explore their understanding of what they are learning and to share their ideas with others
  - teachers use assessment information to make sure that pupils are set work at the right level and they have high expectations of what pupils of every ability can achieve
  - teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are raised
  - teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, identifies clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work and that teachers make sure that pupils respond well to this guidance.
  
- Raise pupils' attainment in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics and reading in Key Stage 2, so that more pupils reach and exceed the nationally expected levels, by ensuring that:
  - all pupils, but especially the most able show they can use their calculation skills to solve word problems in mathematics
  - pupils use their mathematical skills more widely across a range of subjects
  - there is a stronger focus on improving reading, by providing opportunities for pupils to read more widely and especially to adults.
  
- Urgently improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - the senior leadership team is strengthened to provide continuity of leadership on a day-to-day basis and more assistance to the executive headteacher so that the capacity of the school is increased to urgently bring about the necessary improvements
  - all staff with subject leadership responsibility gain the skills they need to monitor achievement and drive improvement
  - the provision for sport is developed through effective use of the primary physical education and sports funding so that it has greater impact on the development of healthy lifestyles.

An external review of governance is undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership 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 governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for

the school.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 7 to 8 July 2015.**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, groups of staff and pupils, members of the interim executive board (IEB) and representatives from the diocese and the local authority.

### **Context**

An assistant headteacher with responsibility for the quality of teaching took up post in June 2015. The acting assistant headteacher and the Year 6 teacher left the school in April 2015. A leader for mathematics has been appointed and will start in September this year.

There are plans for the school to become an academy sponsored by the Pride Multi-Academy Trust. The lead school for this trust is the executive headteacher's school, Dodworth St John the Baptist Church of England Primary Academy.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Based on the unvalidated data from the end of key stage tests, the proportion of the current Year 6 pupils attaining Level 4 in reading and writing is greater than that in Year 6 last year. The proportion of Year 6 gaining a Level 5 has improved in reading and mathematics. As a result, the attainment of pupils in reading and writing this year is in line with the national averages for 2014. Their attainment in mathematics remains below the national average.

The proportion of Year 6 pupils making the expected progress in reading and writing is in line with national expectations from 2014, but below in mathematics. The proportion making more than the expected progress remains below the national average in all three subjects. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 is at least as good as, and often better than, that of their peers.

A greater proportion of Year 2 pupils attained more than a Level 2b in writing this year, halving the large gap that existed between the school's attainment and the national average last year. However, attainment at Key Stage 1 remains below the national average especially in writing and mathematics at higher levels.

The proportion of pupils in Year 1 attaining the expected standard in the phonics (the sounds that letters and groups of letters represent) test has increased and is now in line with the national average from 2014. A larger proportion of pupils in the early years has reached a good level of development this year. The proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average. Given the starting points of the children when they enter the early years, they are making

expected progress. The school's evaluations of children's levels of development have been checked by the local authority this term.

Records kept about the learning of children in the early years have improved since the last monitoring inspection with a useful new form for evaluating children's progress. However, observations of children's work are still too infrequent and do not cover all the areas of learning consistently.

The focus on reading has continued. Pupils read daily in half hour 'guided reading' sessions. The reading session seen in a Key Stage 2 lesson during the inspection was well planned with pupils practising their comprehension skills, extracting information from newspapers and reading one to one with the teaching assistant. Pupils also practise their handwriting, which emphasises the strong focus on good presentation. Improvements in presentation can be seen in pupils' books at Key Stage 2. The use of a reading scheme is improving the reading in the early years and Key Stage 1. The impact of this can be seen in the results of the phonics test.

### **The quality of teaching**

The work of the head of school has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved considerably. Work is planned based on assessment information to meet more accurately the needs of all learners and challenge the most able. Pupils are rarely wasting time doing work that is too easy for them. Marking and feedback are regular and consistently identify next steps to which the pupils respond. Pupils recognise the improvements in the marking of their work and the impact of the feedback in helping them to make better progress. During the inspection pupils were seen responding to feedback in their mathematics books, which enhanced their learning by correcting mistakes or trying more difficult questions. Teachers use questioning effectively to ensure pupils understand their work and can explain their answers. A strong feature in the Year 4/5 mathematics lessons is the helpful explanations pupils give to their peers to help them when they are stuck. Pupils enjoy their work and show good attitudes to their learning. The impact of this improved teaching can be seen in pupils' books. Pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics.

Although there are some improvements in the quality of teaching in the lower years, these improvements are not consistent. At Key Stage 1, teachers are starting to plan learning to meet the needs of individuals. This work is sometimes too hard and sometimes too easy. There are limited opportunities for the pupils to write at length. In mathematics, explanations and questioning are not always helping pupils' understanding of new concepts such as accurate measuring. The teaching of phonics has improved as a result of effective use of the reading scheme. Consequently, pupils better understand the sounds that letters and groups of letters represent. The impact of the inconsistent quality of teaching is attainment at Key Stage 1 which is below the national average.

In the early years, the indoor and outdoor provision are not always used effectively to develop the learning and skills of the children. Questions asked by adults do not develop children's understanding sufficiently. As a result, children are sometimes not engaged with their learning and move around the early years area without purpose. This hampers the progress of the children who are, therefore, not well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

School leaders have worked hard to improve the opportunities for positive play on the playground. Pupils of all ages enjoy a wide range of games using new equipment. As a result, pupils' social and physical skills are developing well.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning play an important part in enhancing learning at Key Stage 2. Although there has been some improvement in behaviour in the lower years, behaviour is still unsettled when learning does not engage the pupils.

The school is addressing a slight decline in attendance with phone calls and visits to pupils' homes.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They set high expectations for staff and pupils who recognise the improvements happening in the school. Staff value the increased stability provided by the executive headteacher and the head of school. They say they feel better about the school than they have for a long time. The head of school provides effective support to staff to help their professional development. The impact is seen in the improvements in the quality of teaching.

New appointments are increasing the capacity of the senior leadership team. The new assistant headteacher and the head of school have worked together to develop a new and more innovative curriculum for September 2015. However, following the departure of the acting assistant headteacher and the Year 6 teacher in April 2015, leadership capacity was reduced during the summer term. The head of school took appropriate action to ensure high quality teaching for Year 6 by teaching them herself. As a result, some aspects of the monitoring and evaluation work of senior leaders have been carried out by members of the IEB. However meetings with teachers to check pupils' progress have not happened. Plans are in place to address this in September 2015.

The IEB members have used their considerable skills in education to support and challenge senior leaders during this period by undertaking monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. This has confirmed the views of all leaders about the

strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching in the school. IEB members have a good understanding of pupils' progress in each key stage, including that of disadvantaged pupils. The impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding (additional government money) can be seen in the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the end of key stage tests this year. The physical education and sports premium funding has continued to enhance the quality of teaching in physical education lessons and provide opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills. For example, Year 6 pupils have developed their dancing skills in preparation for an end-of-year show.

The executive headteacher has focused on plans for the school to become an academy, ensuring effective communication with the community and other stakeholders. The IEB members are supporting the executive headteacher in the transition to academy status. Some members of the IEB will become directors of the Pride Multi-Academy Trust; others will form part of the local governing body in the new academy.

### **External support**

The new local authority representative has joined monitoring activities in order to gain an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She previously worked with the school 12 months ago and recognises the impact of leaders in bringing about school improvement. The staff in the early years have been regularly supported by an early years professional from the local authority. The impact of this work is the assurance of the accuracy of the judgements about children's levels of development and the start of improvements in the records of children's learning.

The ongoing support from the executive headteacher and other staff from his school, Dodworth St John the Baptist Church of England Primary Academy, has been integral in driving the improvements. The Chair of the IEB says the impact of their work has made a significant difference to the leadership and management of the school.