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29 January 2015

Mrs Ceri Cook
Headteacher
Lumbertubs Primary School
Tonmead Road
Northampton
NN3 8HZ

Dear Mrs Cook

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lumbertubs Primary School

Following my visit with Graham Gossage, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27–28 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 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 academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's

Services for Northamptonshire and the Chief Education and Operations Officer for Collaborative Academies Trust.

Yours sincerely

Janet Connor

Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body

cc. Local authority

cc. The Secretary of State

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make good progress by making sure that teachers:
 - expect more from all groups of pupils, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium and those of average ability
 - monitor pupils' progress more closely and set them work at the right level so that they are appropriately challenged
 - engage pupils in stimulating activities so that they are attentive and involved in learning throughout their lessons
 - give pupils precise feedback to help them understand how well they are achieving and how to improve their work.
- Improve achievement throughout the school by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills
 - pupils using their calculation skills more often in solving practical mathematical problems
 - helping pupils to value the importance of tidy presentation so that their written work is clear and easy to understand.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior, other leaders and governors check more rigorously the effectiveness of the school's plans and actions in securing essential improvements, particularly in pupils' achievement
 - monitoring of teaching and reviews of pupils' written work focus sharply on the progress of different groups
 - staff training is directly linked to eliminating weaknesses in teaching
 - governors support and challenge leaders to move the school forward rapidly to become a good school.

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

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 27–28 January 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders, including the early years leader and subject leaders. Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. A meeting was also held with the Academy Learning Adviser from Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT). Inspectors spoke with parents and pupils. Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including six seen jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and checked the single central record. The academy's improvement plan and the trust's statement of action were also evaluated.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a Leading Practitioner of Teaching has been appointed. A lead teacher for curriculum development has also been appointed. One teacher has resigned and another teacher has been appointed. Two new community governors have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate across year groups and subjects. However, it is not accelerating consistently or rapidly enough to successfully close the attainment gaps for the oldest pupils. These gaps remain wide, and predicted outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 indicate that they will not reach the standards expected of them in mathematics, reading and writing.

Senior leaders' analysis of current academy data show that the youngest pupils, including those children in the early years, have attainment that is closer to age-related expectations. Progress in the early years is accelerating. Children in this key stage are now better placed to achieve the ambitious targets set by academy leaders. The majority of children in both Nursery and Reception are developing skills that are closer to age-related expectation across many of the early learning goals. However, children's reading and writing skills in both classes are less well developed than other areas of learning.

Pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics, reading and writing are broadly in line with age-related expectations. Pupils in Year 1 have made accelerated progress in all three subjects, albeit from a low baseline. This represents good progress for these pupils. Academy leaders have set ambitious targets to improve the outcomes for Year 2 pupils. Progress and attainment in this year group are strongest in mathematics and reading. Improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) have meant that, for the first time, the pupils in Year 1

last year (those pupils currently in Year 2) attained standards slightly above the national average.

Attainment in Key Stage 2 is below and sometimes well below age-related expectations. The gaps in pupils' learning broaden as they go up the school. By Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading and writing is well below the national average. Although academy leaders are beginning to accelerate pupils' progress in these subjects, it is inconsistent across both year groups and subjects.

The achievement of boys and girls varies in mathematics, reading and writing. For example, in reading, boys make similar progress to girls in Years 1 and 4, but boys make better progress than girls do in Year 3. In writing, boys are making more progress than the girls. There is similarly variation across the academy in the progress of boys and girls in mathematics.

Achievement for other groups within the academy also varies. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates in all three subjects. Pupils for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding make similar progress to others in mathematics, reading and writing. However, the gaps in attainment for this group of pupils are wide in all three subjects.

Improvements in the presentation of pupils' work are also inconsistent. The presentation of work in pupils' books is best in the early years and Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, presentation in pupils' books is mixed in both writing and mathematics. Not all teachers have the same expectations as others, and this is demonstrated in pupils' work.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved. However, it is inconsistent and reflects the current outcomes for pupils as seen in academy data. Inadequate teaching remains and has yet to be eradicated.

Teaching in the early years has improved as a direct result of teachers planning tasks that are better suited to meet the specific learning needs of young children. Teachers have high expectations of what their children can achieve and, as a result, standards are rising.

The teaching of phonics is much more systematic and more closely matches the capabilities of the pupils. A clear system for checking how well pupils are doing means teachers challenge pupils at the right level for their ability. This is beginning to have an impact on their progress in reading and writing, and gaps in pupils' knowledge are closing at Key Stage 1. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils were confidently reading and writing the new sounds they had learnt. They shared their

reading books and supported each other to read unfamiliar words. As a result, these pupils made good progress in their learning.

In marking pupils' work, teachers' comments vary in their usefulness to help pupils improve their learning. Where marking is at its best, teachers communicate how well pupils are doing, and the marking offers challenging and thoughtful comments on what pupils need to do to further improve their learning. Pupils are given time to think carefully about the comments and to respond. As a result of this marking, pupils' work showed improved understanding and better progress. However, not all marking is of this quality and, where it is weaker, pupils' learning slows. Pupils appreciate the new way teachers mark their work and are keen to respond and improve their learning.

Teachers' planning has improved and their expectations of what their pupils can achieve has risen. This can be seen in the teaching of speaking and listening skills in order to develop writing. Most teachers plan tasks that are better suited to the specific learning needs and capabilities of different groups of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson, pupils understood what they needed to do to improve their work because their learning targets were clear. As a result, all pupils made progress in their learning. However, in many year groups, expectations are not high enough for the most-able pupils. Planning and tasks for this group do not challenge them sufficiently in order to raise their attainment quickly.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour around the academy and in classrooms is generally polite and courteous. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. This is as a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching. However, where teachers plan tasks that do not engage their pupils' interest, low-level disruption remains, with pupils talking and distracting others.

Overall, pupils' attendance has improved. However, the percentage of persistent absence has increased over the last year. Academy leaders are aware of this trend and are acting to address the issue and support those concerned.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are demonstrating determined leadership. They are quick to take advice from external support and to act upon it to bring about the necessary changes in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. The academy improvement plan has been amended since the previous monitoring visit. As a result, there are well-defined actions with tighter timeframes for improvement. The governing body now has a distinct role in checking the quality of academy leaders' work to raise achievement. However, the expected outcomes set

out for pupils' attainment are not sharp enough for governors to hold academy leaders to account robustly.

Academy leaders have a clear picture about the progress of different groups of pupils. They use a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, including scrutinising pupils' books, observing lessons and speaking to the pupils about their work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are more aware of where the strengths and weaknesses are in the quality of teaching. They have identified priorities for staff training. As a result, teaching is improving and an increasing number of pupils are beginning to accelerate the progress they make in mathematics, reading and writing. However, this support has been more successful in some cases than in others, as some teaching is still inadequate.

The academy's other leaders are beginning to develop their roles. As a result, they are more able to support the headteacher to bring about the necessary improvements. Subject and year group leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning. However, they do not have a clear understanding of the impact of recent initiatives; for example, to improve pupils' calculation skills. This is hindering their effectiveness. Leadership in the early years is effective and children's work is carefully analysed. As a result, plans to improve children's learning are sharply focused and outcomes for children in the early years are improving quickly.

The governing body has fully accepted the findings from the review of governance. It is resolute in wanting bring about improvements quickly. As a result, it has established its own programme for checking the quality of leaders' work. Governors regularly visit the academy with a clear focus on actions identified in the school improvement plan. For example, governors have checked to see if the new policy for marking pupils' work is being followed by all staff. Governors asked searching questions of school leaders when they found that teachers were not consistently following the agreed marking policy.

External support

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose, but some weaknesses remain. The sponsor's actions to challenge academy leaders are not tight enough. Although there are identified timeframes for key outcomes in pupils' achievement to be met, the expected outcomes are not clear enough to be effective in holding academy leaders to account.

CAT is providing effective support to academy leaders through the Academy Learning Adviser (ALA). The ALA has supported academy leaders to establish an effective system for judging the quality of teaching. The ALA has also supported academy leaders to challenge inadequate teaching more robustly. As a result, teaching is beginning to improve. The sponsor's support of the governing body has been instrumental in bringing about the better challenge from academy governors.