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6 February 2015

Mrs N Shrimpton
Headteacher
Longford C of E (VC) Primary School
High Road
Britford
Salisbury
SP5 4DS

Dear Mrs Shrimpton,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Longford C of E (VC) Primary School

Following my visit with Julie Dyer, associate inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 February 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 October 2013. 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 Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire and the Diocese of Salisbury.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013

- Eliminate inadequate teaching and ensure that teaching across all year groups is consistently good, by:
 - developing teachers' knowledge about the topics and subjects they are teaching
 - ensuring teachers plan work which challenges each pupil to move their learning forward quickly in lessons, with deadlines for the quantity and quality of work they are to complete
 - ensuring teachers acquire a clear understanding of how to accurately assess pupils' progress and how to use this information to adapt questioning, explanations and tasks during the lesson, particularly for the most and least able pupils.
- Improve the pace and consistency of pupils' progress for all groups and across the key stages in order to raise standards in writing, particularly at Key Stage 2, by:
 - giving pupils more frequent opportunities to write
 - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their writing and that their targets are readily available and used to focus their efforts
 - ensuring pupils have the time and opportunity to improve their work based on accurate and constructive feedback in teachers' marking, expecting pupils to work at the highest levels they are capable of in lessons.
- Seek more effective interim measures to support the few pupils with poor behaviour so learning is not disrupted.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance and middle leaders, in taking responsibility for identifying key issues and quickly bringing about improvements, by:
 - evaluating the performance of pupils, including the most and least able and those eligible for support through the pupil premium, and identifying any key issues and then implementing solutions rigorously
 - monitoring the quality of teaching to identify good practice that can be shared across the school
 - ensuring the curriculum takes better account of different ages and abilities in each class
 - ensuring teachers provide pupils with opportunities to undertake some learning outside of school time
 - ensuring the governing body develops more effective and accurate ways of checking and comparing the school's performance against that of other schools nationally to better hold leaders to account.

An external review of governance to include a specific focus on 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including school improvement action plans and notes from governors' visits to the school. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of Governors and other representatives of the governing body, pupils from the school council and representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Salisbury. Inspectors attended a staff development meeting led by a local national support school. The inspector also spoke informally with a small group of parents and with pupils outside of lessons.

Context

Two teachers left the school at the end of December 2014. They have been replaced by one full-time teacher and two part-time teachers. Another full-time teacher has recently been appointed to support the teaching in Key Stage 2. There is currently a vacancy for a parent governor. The number of pupils of roll is now 43.

Achievement of pupils at the school

School leaders' most recent checks on pupils' learning indicate the school is now beginning to address effectively the underachievement of pupils as pupils begin to make better and more secure progress in lessons. The recent work seen in books also shows a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' writing as well as their presentation skills. These improvements are because teachers now set clear expectations of what pupils must do for each piece of work they complete. Pupils write for a range of audiences and respond to their teachers' marking. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making some progress in reading and mathematics. In writing however, pupils' progress is less evident, with some pupils, particularly the most able, not making the progress they should be making. Where learning is strongest, teachers regularly check on the progress individual pupils are making during lessons. They use this information to adapt their teaching to provide more personalised support. This was particularly the case in a Key Stage 2 English lesson where pupils were learning how to be effective authors. The class teacher expertly picked up on a pupil's observations to reinforce his good use of similes. The few disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are well provided for and are making progress in line with their peers.

The new Reception teacher has quickly gained an accurate understanding of the learning needs of the children in her class. Adults now use this information effectively to provide a range of stimulating activities which are helping to allow all children to develop their skills and knowledge. The recent checks on learning indicate children are already beginning to make progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Similarly, older pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making

better progress in lessons because they too are now provided with work that is carefully tailored to meet their individual learning needs.

The quality of teaching

Pupils in the Early Years and Key Stage 2 class have responded well to their new teachers' raised expectations of what they might achieve. For example, in a Reception class reading lesson, children confidently practised spelling new words and writing simple sentences correctly. Teachers set high expectations for what pupils should achieve in each lesson. They ensure the activities motivate pupils as well as challenge them. Work seen by inspectors in pupils' books confirms teachers' high expectations. They mark pupils' work regularly and provide feedback comments that help pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve. Where teaching is at its best, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to set work at the right levels for pupils. Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils' interests and motivate pupils to want to learn. Pupils who met with inspectors said their attitudes to learning are getting better because 'teachers are making learning more fun!' In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson teachers worked well together to challenge as well as support pupils of all abilities. However, occasionally, work provided does not always enable the most able pupils to make the accelerated progress they are capable of making. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils further.

Teaching assistants say they are well supported by the headteacher. They are now better informed by teachers so that they are clear about what they need to do to support individual pupils and groups. Teaching assistants are not yet fully trained in managing behaviour and supporting pupils with special educational needs. Those who met with inspectors said they appreciate the time they are given to prepare and the effective training they have received to date. Senior leaders acknowledge that the professional development and deployment of teaching assistants remains an area for improvement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in lessons have improved significantly since the previous monitoring inspection. This improved behaviour is because teachers carefully plan lessons to provide all pupils with more interesting learning that motivates and keeps them engaged. As a result, pupils are developing positive attitudes to learning and say they now enjoy coming to school much more. In lessons, inspectors saw pupils speaking respectfully to adults and showing support and appreciation to one another. Those pupils who met with inspectors confirmed that behaviour has improved significantly since their new teachers have arrived and that they feel safe in school. Outside of lessons pupils play well together and enjoy the space and good-quality resources provided for them. Staff take their safeguarding duties seriously and ensure that pupils remain safe at all times.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has secured the trust and confidence of pupils, parents and governors in her drive to establish consistently good teaching throughout the school. A pupil representative told inspectors, 'Mrs Shrimpton arrived and made a difference!' Indeed, the headteacher has successfully managed significant changes to teaching provision since the previous monitoring visit with the support of governors and the local authority. She has ensured that new members of staff are supported appropriately and uphold the same high expectations for pupils. The new teachers who met with inspectors say they feel welcomed by colleagues, pupils, parents and governors. They have made getting to know their pupils' learning needs a priority in order to provide for the pupils' wide range of learning needs. Good communication with the headteacher and one another is ensuring teachers are consistent in the way they plan lessons, mark pupils' work and manage pupils' behaviour.

In recent months, governors have successfully overseen the building and completion of a new school hall alongside securing improvements to the quality of teaching. This has been a demanding time for governors and a considerable challenge. However, members of the governing body continue to be ably led and guided by the Chair of Governors. They remain deeply committed to the school and are determined to secure lasting school improvements for all pupils. Governors appreciate the good communication they enjoy with the headteacher which is allowing them to understand the work of the school more fully. With more accurate information now available to them governors are gaining in confidence to ask more challenging questions of the headteacher. Even so, governors acknowledge further training is required to upskill less experienced members.

External support

The school continues to rely on the expertise of external partners and agencies to maintain improved teaching provision. Staff are working closely with colleagues from a nearby national support school to agree writing standards for pupils and to provide leadership support for pupils with special educational needs. The local authority has committed additional financial resources to the school in order to sustain the number of teachers above that typically found in a school of this size. The local authority continues to provide training for teachers to strengthen their expertise in English and mathematics. The diocesan representative continues to provide valuable support to the headteacher when checking on pupils' standards and progress within the school.