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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 to your academy on 29–30 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third 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.

I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint NQTs.

Having considered all the evidence, the academy may appoint one newly qualified teacher.

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 Officer for Collaborative Academies Trust.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector

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 third monitoring inspection on 29–30 April 2015

Evidence

I observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other academy leaders including, the lead practitioner for teaching, and four subject leaders. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. A meeting was also held with the Academy Learning Adviser (ALA) from Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT). I spoke with parents and pupils. I observed eight lessons, all jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. I scrutinised pupils' work. The single central record was checked. The academy's improvement plan and the trust's statement of action were also scrutinised.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a new teacher has been appointed to begin in September 2015. A teacher seconded from another CAT academy has now been appointed permanently to this academy. A further part-time teacher has been appointed for two days per week. A teaching assistant has resigned. One governor resigned and two new governors have been elected.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress continues to accelerate across the academy. This is particularly true for mathematics and reading. While pupils' progress in writing is improving as well, it is not improving as quickly as the other subjects. Wide gaps in pupils' attainment remain, particularly for older pupils.

Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year. However, the historical gaps in their learning mean they remain behind age-related expectations in all three subjects. Academy predictions for end-of-year outcomes for these pupils show a large percentage of pupils will leave the academy not well prepared for the next stage in their education. Predicted outcomes for the most-able pupils are well below last year's national averages for mathematics, and writing in particular. In the remainder of Key Stage 2, attainment gaps remain, but these are closing more quickly.

In Key Stage 1, pupils are working broadly in line with age-related expectations. Academy predictions for the end of Year 2 show that pupils in this year group will leave Key Stage 1 broadly in line with the national average for last year in mathematics, reading and writing. As a result, this cohort of pupils, are expected to be better prepared for the next stage in their education in Key Stage 2. Predictions for the most-able pupils in Year 2 mean these pupils would attain similar outcomes to the most-able pupils nationally last year.

There is a similar picture in the early years. Children in this key stage are making good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. At this stage in the year, Reception children are already exceeding the end-of-year outcomes for a good level of development from the previous year. School predictions for the end of the Reception Year mean children will leave this key stage broadly in line with last year's national average for a good level of development. This represents a significant improvement.

Across the rest of the academy, progress in learning is good. There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls in mathematics, reading or, generally, in writing. However, in writing, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length consistently across different subjects. As a result, they do not practise enough the skills they are gaining in writing lessons. This is in part the reason why pupils' attainment in writing lags behind that of mathematics and reading. Although pupils are making at least expected progress in writing, some boys' writing is not as well developed as that of the girls, particularly in Year 4 and Year 6.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making progress in line with their peers across the school. Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding are also making progress in line with their peers in mathematics, reading and writing. However, the attainment of this group of pupils is below that of other pupils in the academy in all three subjects. Currently, they are not making the accelerated progress needed to close the gaps in attainment.

The identified most-able pupils are making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing. However, not enough pupils in the academy have been identified as being able to achieve above age-related expectations. Consequently, expectations for some pupils are too low and, as a result, not enough of the more-able pupils in each class are achieving the highest outcomes.

The presentation of pupils' work has improved. It is now more consistent across the academy. Pupils' handwriting is more consistently neat and tidy. The academy has introduced clear expectations for younger pupils in how to hold a pencil and form letters correctly. This is having a positive impact on the presentation of work in their books. Some older pupils still find it a challenge to present their work neatly.

The quality of teaching

Since the last visit, the quality of teaching has improved across all key stages. This is due to the hard work and commitment of senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other staff. The quality of teaching is now more consistent across the school and inadequate teaching has been eradicated.

Pupils' progress in learning has increased because teaching generally caters for the specific learning needs and different abilities of the pupils. Teachers are increasing

their expectations of what their pupils can achieve and this is beginning to raise standards. The amount of work seen in pupils' books demonstrates this increased expectation and how hard pupils can work when these expectations are made clear to them. As a result, attainment gaps in pupils' learning are beginning to close. However, teachers' planning for the most-able pupils is still not addressing the learning needs of enough pupils. Only a small percentage of pupils are identified as being more able. Therefore, those who remain unidentified do not get work that challenges them to reach the highest outcomes. This is having a detrimental impact on the overall standards in the academy.

Teachers' improved assessment of pupils' learning on a day-to-day basis means they are able to set the majority of pupils further development tasks at the correct level to deepen their understanding. Teachers' marking is now much more consistent across the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said they felt this helped them to improve their learning. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils had the opportunity to develop their understanding of fractions. The marking tasks set by the teacher helped pupils of different abilities to think carefully about their work. The tasks were challenging because the teacher expected them not only to answer the questions but also to explain their thinking. As a result, all pupils were challenged and made good progress.

Although pupils' progress in mathematics has increased, there are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge that mean planning for mathematical learning is not as precise as it needs to be in some classes. When this happens, pupils' learning slows because work is either too hard or too easy.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from clear and detailed plans to meet their individual learning needs. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and provide these pupils with careful explanations and support.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils in this academy are keen to learn and take full advantage of the improved teaching to help them improve their work. Most pupils take pride in their work and present it well.

During the inspection, pupils were seen on a number of occasions supporting each other in their tasks and this was having a positive impact on their well-being and good attitudes to learning.

School leaders continue to address persistent absence at the academy. Their tenacity has resulted in the percentage of persistent absence reducing since the last monitoring visit.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher and deputy headteacher continue to demonstrate determined and ambitious leadership. They have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching and have begun to raise attainment across the academy. Issues raised at the last monitoring visit have been addressed and the newly formed wider leadership team at the academy continues to develop well.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher set high expectations for the pace of change. They have developed an uncompromising approach to academy improvement that is having a positive impact on the new middle leadership team. At the last visit, although middle leaders checked how well pupils were doing, they had not developed the skills needed to demonstrate the impact they were having on raising standards. This aspect of leadership is improving. During this visit, middle leaders were better able to demonstrate how their actions contributed to improvements in teachers' planning to raise attainment. However, this is a new development and is not a well-established part of their role.

Academy leaders have further improved how they track the progress of pupils. Consequently, leaders have a good understanding of pupils' achievement and they focus resources sharply where they are needed. For example, academy leaders were aware that pupils in Year 3 needed further support to accelerate their progress and close learning gaps. Increased teacher support was identified and deployed quickly. Outcomes for pupils in this year group are improving as a result.

Academy leaders regularly check the success of their actions against the success criteria in their action plan. Leaders rightly alter and amend their actions if the desired outcomes are not met. However, leaders are not always as clear as they need to be about precisely what difference the new plans for improvement will make. As a result, middle leaders do not always have the information they need to hold teachers rigorously to account for their work.

The Chair of the Governing Body exhibits determined leadership. As a result, the governing body is continuing to grow in its effectiveness. For example, governors were aware that all staff had not been following the marking policy. The consequent challenge to academy leaders has now been followed up with further visits to check if leaders have taken action to rectify this. Governors' reports note the improvements to teachers' marking seen on this inspection visit. Governors know each other's skills well and the Chair deploys governors effectively to hold senior leaders to account for their work.

During the visit, a change of use in the early years' outdoor area was noted. As a result of this, children were seen playing in an area not easily seen by adults. Academy leaders are aware that the current risk assessment for this area is not

sufficiently rigorous. The headteacher is taking the correct action to minimise any risks to children's well-being until a more permanent solution to this risk can be put in place.

External support

The academy's sponsor, CAT, has addressed the weaknesses in the statement of action. The plan shows clear indications of the actions the sponsor plans to take to support academy improvement. It also identifies the appropriate level of challenge the sponsor will offer to ensure the academy is meeting its targets for improvement. The ALA from CAT continues to provide effective and timely support to academy leaders to check the quality of teaching and improve planning for the needs of different pupils. She has also supported the work of the special educational needs leader in ensuring that this group of pupils are well supported to improve their learning.