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Mr Peter Neale
Interim Headteacher
Central Church of England Junior School
Orchard Street
Chichester
West Sussex
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Dear Mr Neale

Special measures monitoring inspection of Central Church of England Junior School

Following my visit with Debra Anderson, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 10 and 11 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015. 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 not taking effective action 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 and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2015

- Make sure teaching is good and provides pupils with opportunities to learn more quickly, by ensuring:
 - teachers check on pupils' understanding as it develops and adapt their explanations and pupils' tasks appropriately
 - teachers' planning focuses clearly on the skills that pupils need to learn
 - pupils benefit from regular opportunities to read and enjoy a wide range of interesting books
 - all teachers understand how best to promote the learning of the most-able pupils and those with special educational needs
- Increase the rate and consistency of the progress pupils make across the school, particularly in mathematics and writing, by:
 - improving teachers' understanding of what skills and knowledge pupils should be confident with at each stage of their learning
 - making sure teachers expect more of pupils of all abilities
 - ensuring teachers give pupils more precise feedback about what pupils need to do to improve, and ensure pupils make these improvements quickly
 - supporting disadvantaged pupils more effectively, including in lessons, so that their progress accelerates.
- Improve pupils' attitudes towards their learning by:
 - involving pupils in setting appropriate targets and checking their progress towards them
 - making sure pupils develop their determination to tackle challenging tasks, without giving up too quickly
 - ensuring pupils understand how they can resolve minor issues and conflicts themselves before they escalate.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school, by:
 - involving leaders at all levels in checking the quality of teaching and give teachers more helpful feedback about what needs to improve
 - making sure that middle leaders have the skills and confidence to check that teachers are making the changes that need to happen and that improvements are sustained over time
 - ensuring that policies are up to date and reflect current requirements
 - reviewing the way the pupil premium funding is used, in order to accelerate rapidly the progress eligible pupils make.
- Increase the effectiveness of governors in holding the school to account for bringing about improvements, by:
 - following-up issues that are identified more rigorously
 - establishing more robust systems for keeping a close check that policies and procedures are up to date and reflect current changes in practice and best practice
 - setting higher expectations for the quality of leadership in the school and the impact leaders have on improving the quality of teaching.

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 10–11 November 2015

Evidence

During this monitoring inspection, 17 lessons were observed, five jointly with leaders. Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. An inspector spoke with parents and heard pupils from Year 3 read. Pupils spoke to inspectors and were observed during lunchtime. Inspectors reviewed the school's own information about pupils' current achievement and records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching. In addition they evaluated behaviour, attendance and safeguarding information as well as local authority reports. A sample of pupils' writing and mathematics books from all year groups was scrutinised. The single central record was checked.

Context

Since my last visit, an interim headteacher has been appointed for the autumn term. The leader with responsibility for special educational needs retired at the end of the summer term. An assistant headteacher with responsibility for inclusion took up post in September. Three new teachers have been appointed in Years 4, 5 and 6. Two new governors have joined the governing body.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' progress has not picked up strongly enough since the previous monitoring visit. Current work in pupils' books shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding in writing and mathematics are not improving as much as they should. Across all year groups, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs make slow progress, if any, because teaching does not address the most pressing barriers to learning. Learning opportunities are not taking into account pupils' different starting points and the most-able pupils are not challenged effectively.

Leaders, with the support of the local authority, have developed systems for gathering information about pupils' achievement. Information gathered this term, using new systems, focuses appropriately on the progress groups of pupils are making towards meeting the standards expected for their age. Leaders have secured a suitable range of opportunities for teachers to discuss their assessments but checks on the accuracy of their judgements have been limited thus far. None have been carried out by leaders in the school this half term. Consequently, recent performance information has significant inaccuracies and is unreliable. This has been identified by leaders and reported to governors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

There have been some improvements to the quality of teaching since the last monitoring inspection. Pupils now know what they are going to learn and how they can be successful in each session because teachers share and discuss this with them. Resources and teaching spaces are increasingly well organised and supportive of learning. Teachers are beginning to use questions to check pupils' understanding and to ensure that pupils know how to complete tasks.

Teachers more routinely pick up spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Where pupils are given time to make corrections, pupils are more accurate in their writing. In some classes, presentation of work shows improvement because teachers' expectations have increased. Pupils in these classes know that they are expected to work harder now and show increased pride in their work. However, this is inconsistent and in classes where expectations are too low, work is unfinished and untidy.

Planning in English and mathematics has been suitably refreshed and improved in all year groups. This has increased pupils' enthusiasm for learning and pupils say that they enjoy the new topics that bring their learning together. Teachers' planning files include information about the current achievement of groups of pupils. However, teachers do not use this information well to address gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers' identification of barriers to learning has not been sufficiently supported and is underdeveloped. Consequently, teachers' feedback does not help pupils improve quickly.

Teachers reflect appropriately on their practice and show a commitment to improve. They respond positively to support from external consultants, making changes to their teaching linked to the advice they receive. This support, however, has not been focused forensically enough on the aspects of teaching that need most improvement. This includes teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics. As a result, teachers' explanations are too often unclear and do not enable pupils to develop an accurate understanding of key mathematical concepts. This, coupled with some inaccurate marking, significantly hinders pupils' progress in this subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have taken action to ensure that safeguarding in the school is strengthened. An audit of this area of work has been followed by effective changes to address the security and safety of pupils on site during the school day. Procedures and policies for entry to the site are now appropriately robust. In addition, systems to monitor attendance have been strengthened appropriately. Absence and lateness is now recorded correctly and followed up. This has ensured that pupils at risk of harm are safeguarded well.

Pupils' conduct at playtimes and around the school has improved and there are reducing incidents of misbehaviour. Increased supervision, improved visibility of senior leaders and stronger recording systems all contribute effectively to this. Rewards for good behaviour now link more closely to the values of the school. Parents say that the playground seems 'more orderly', with 'higher levels of supervision'. Pupils notice and appreciate the changes that have been made and value the new stickers they receive for being polite and helping others. They say they feel safer at playtimes now because there are more adults on duty.

Pupils' learning behaviours have not improved quickly because teaching does not yet support pupils to learn effectively. Too often, pupils lose focus and become distracted during lessons because activities do not meet their needs well enough. Although some teachers ensure activities capture pupils' imagination and interest, inconsistency prevails. Too much learning time is wasted and progress slows, particularly in afternoon sessions, because activities are not engaging or challenging pupils' thinking.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have taken a number of steps to improve aspects of the school's work this term. Actions have ensured, for example, that leaders report regularly on the checks that they make. Senior leaders now collect information from these checks so that they can follow up the impact of any changes. This is at an early stage. Leaders at all levels know which checks to make and when, because a timetable is in place which sets this out clearly.

Since the last monitoring visit, the required review of pupil premium funding has been completed. This identifies crucial actions for leaders to take to improve the use and impact of this additional funding. An action plan is in place with targets related to the progress disadvantaged pupils are expected to make. Leaders acknowledge that the targets they have set do not reflect appropriate ambition for pupils' achievement when compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders have audited provision but have not yet evaluated the impact of additional support for these pupils. The progress for pupils in receipt of additional funding this term is disappointing.

Leaders now review policies more regularly and the majority of these are now up to date. The safeguarding policy complies with current legislation and a new behaviour policy is currently being ratified by governors. However, the statutory reporting for pupils with special educational needs is out of date. In addition, although planned, teachers' performance management has not been completed within the published timescales for this academic year. Leaders and governors acknowledge that this timescale has slipped.

Leaders' actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils have not been effective. Leaders have not rigorously checked that teaching is improving quickly enough and leading to improved outcomes for pupils. Support for this area of improvement from leaders within the school has been too limited. As a result, teachers have not developed the range of skills they need to ensure that pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. In addition, subject leaders have not taken greater responsibility for improvements to teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Governors are clear about the role they need to play to bring about improvements. New governors have completed training to ensure that they make a positive contribution to school improvement. A governors' monitoring policy is in place and visits are appropriately linked to specific areas of improvement. A more regular programme of policy review is in place. However, reports about improvements to teaching, learning and assessment shared with governors have been over generous. This has significantly limited their oversight of improvement and their ability to hold leaders to account effectively.

The governing body have taken appropriate steps, in partnership with the diocese, to consider options for academisation. This is at consultation stage with a view to an academy order being in place by January 2016.

External support

The local authority acknowledges that their reporting has been over generous with regard to teaching, learning and assessment because it was not fully rooted in an appropriate range of robust evidence, including pupil outcomes. This has been unhelpful to the school and governors. Plentiful support, whilst welcomed and appreciated by leaders and staff, has not maintained a forensic focus on the key barriers to improving teaching and pupils' progress – leading to the removal of special measures. The local authority has not ensured sufficient oversight, since the previous monitoring visit, over the impact of support it has commissioned to improve teaching and outcomes for pupils.