

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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

Dear Mrs Cook

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lumbertubs Primary School

Following my visit with Ann Glynne-Jones, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 16–17 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth 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 taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint one further NQT.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 16–17 November 2015.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other academy leaders, including the lead practitioner for teaching, three subject leaders and the leader for early years. Inspectors also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. A meeting was also held with the Academy Learning Adviser (ALA) from Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT). Inspectors spoke with parents and pupils. Inspectors observed 12 lessons, all jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. The single central record was checked.

Context

Since the last inspection, the academy leadership team has been reorganised. A middle leader has been appointed as assessment lead. Mathematics and English leaders have also been appointed. A middle leader, returning from maternity leave part-time, will support the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils. One new full-time and one part-time teacher have joined the academy on temporary contracts. A sports coach and a music teacher have joined the academy to support the teaching of these subjects.

Outcomes for pupils

The academy continues to work hard to ensure the gaps in pupils' attainment close quickly in mathematics, reading and writing. The percentage of pupils who make more than expected progress in all three subjects has increased since the last inspection. Writing outcomes have improved because pupils have more opportunities to practise their skills and, as a result, they make better progress. However, there are still wide gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers, particularly the combined attainment in mathematics, reading and writing, especially in upper Key Stage 2.

The outcomes for pupils who were in Year 6 last year have improved. This is because they were taught well and their progress accelerated considerably as a result. Unvalidated data for pupils who achieved a Level 4 in mathematics, reading and writing in the 2015 tests show attainment gaps have narrowed. As a result, pupils left the academy with attainment much closer to the national average than in previous years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading was better than in writing. At the higher levels, outcomes have also improved. More pupils than before achieved Level 5 in mathematics, reading and writing, although this is still well below the national figure. Girls outperformed boys in all three subjects.

Proportions of pupils in Year 6 last year who made expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing are broadly similar to proportions in these subjects for all pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils in this year group who made more than expected progress is similar to the national average in reading. In writing, the proportion is above the national average, and in mathematics, it is slightly below. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils still lags behind their peers and all pupils nationally, apart from in writing.

For pupils who were in Year 2 last year, outcomes have also improved. More pupils achieved a Level 2 in mathematics, reading and writing than before. Pupils are now broadly in line with the national average at Level 2 for mathematics and reading and only slightly below in writing. However, not enough pupils are secure within this level in all three subjects. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in mathematics, reading and writing is also improved and is now approaching the national average. There is a similar picture in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) test. The percentage of pupils who met the required standard was well above the national average this year.

Children leaving the early years and beginning Year 1 this year are better prepared for the next stage in their education. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development is in line with all children nationally. This is a significant improvement on last year's outcomes. However, not enough more-able children exceed this measure.

Across the rest of the academy, pupils' progress in learning continues to accelerate. Attainment gaps are narrowing in mathematics, reading and writing. For the current Year 6 pupils, the attainment gaps in reading and writing have closed. In mathematics, the gap remains. In Years 5 and 4, although there are still gaps between pupils' attainment and age-related expectations, these are closing. Not enough pupils are at age-related expectations in all three subjects in any year group across the school.

Girls continue to outperform boys in mathematics, reading and writing. However, both groups are making good progress in their learning. White British pupils' attainment lags behind their peers in mathematics, reading and writing. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in mathematics, reading and writing.

Although teachers focus on the development of grammar, punctuation and spelling, not enough pupils are developing the skills they need fast enough to raise attainment in this important aspect of their learning.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers continue to challenge themselves and each other to improve their teaching so that all pupils make good progress and learning gaps close. Teachers show the same determination as senior leaders to bring about improvements quickly.

Marking is now consistent across the school. At its best, teachers' clear and precise comments about how pupils can improve their work are very effective in supporting them so that they deepen their learning. It is clear from pupils' books that pupils gain a great deal from responding to the marking and make good progress as a result. This is especially strong in Years 5 and 6.

A real climate for learning is developing across the academy. Well-established routines in many classes ensure pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers and teaching assistants alike have high expectations of how pupils should behave and learn. Pupils respond well to this and most try their best to produce work that is of good quality. In the lessons visited during the inspection, pupils' engagement in learning was clear because pupils were enjoying their tasks. For the most part, the task were precisely planned to meet pupils' learning needs. However, in some classes, the most-able pupils are not challenged as well as they could be to ensure they make more rapid progress.

Where the quality of pupils' learning is at its best, teachers know exactly when to allow pupils to explore and investigate new concepts and when to intervene with questions that support them to gain deeper understanding. This has improved since the last inspection. For example, in Year 5, pupils were exploring ways to improve their writing by using different writing techniques. The most-able pupils worked alone as a group and confidently supported each other by assessing the quality of each other's work and by making appropriate suggestions for improvement. The teacher's sound knowledge of their learning needs meant that she was able to leave them to complete this task without support while she supported other pupils. As a result, all pupils made good progress.

Although, the quality of teaching and learning is much improved, there is still some inconsistency in how teachers plan and support learning. The teaching of grammar, punctuation and, in particular spelling, is not taught systematically enough for teachers to track how well pupils are gaining these key skills. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up to their peers quickly enough to close the gaps in their attainment in mathematics, reading and writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Across the academy, pupils' behaviour in class and around the academy is much improved. Pupils themselves recognise and appreciate the changes made to their learning environment. In a meeting with older pupils, inspectors were told how

important the 'core values' of the academy were to pupils. One pupil gave an example of how she was trying to develop determination after hearing how important it was in assembly.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are also improved. This is because teachers are planning better to meet their needs and pupils enjoy what they are doing. Pupils said they appreciate how their teachers offer help and support when needed and pupils recognise this helps them to make better progress in their learning.

Parents spoken with during the inspection agree their children are happier at the academy and they are making better progress.

The academy has successfully lowered the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from school since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a sound understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. They are resolute in not accepting second best for any pupil at Lumbertubs Primary. As a result of careful tracking, they know that some groups of pupils are not making as much progress as they should to close learning gaps.

Leaders' plans to address areas of weakness are appropriate and timely. For example, a new leader has been appointed to champion the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils. However, once actions for improvement have been identified, leaders do not always set precise targets for improvement and therefore the effectiveness of their actions is not easy to evaluate.

Academy leaders work well together. The new leadership structure has effectively distributed accountability for the progress of pupils to a wider group. As a result, the headteacher and deputy headteacher no longer lead all the actions for improvement. Middle leaders, such as the mathematics leader and the English leader, check the quality of teaching and learning for themselves. They form their own improvement plans based on their knowledge of how well pupils are doing. This is effective in identifying whole school and individual teachers' training needs.

The assessment leader and the leader for teaching also support senior leaders in targeting resources and training precisely where they are needed. For example, the new 'rapid progress plans' identify individual pupil's gaps in learning, and leaders are able to plan interventions to fill those gaps. The leader for teaching works with individual teachers to address any weaknesses in the quality of their work. As a result, leadership as a whole is more effective in addressing areas of development quickly and, consequently, pupils' attainment is rising.

The governing body has developed its own plan for checking the quality of education at the academy. Governors continue to visit the academy regularly to meet with academy leaders and visit the classes. However, their plan for checking how well the academy is doing is not sufficiently aligned to the leaders' development plan to support governors' efficiency in holding leaders to account for their work.

Since the last inspection, the early years' outdoor area has been improved. The academy sponsor acted quickly to address the issue of children's safety while playing in an area not clearly visible by adults. Building work has made this outdoor area more open and children are safer as a result.

External support

The Academy Learning Advisor (ALA) from CAT is gradually reducing the level of support she offers to the academy. This is as a result of academy leaders' ability to plan and make improvements based more securely on their own understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. The ALA continues to support middle leaders in development of their role. As a result, they have gained in confidence and are better able to check the quality of teaching and learning in the academy. The ALA has also brokered the support of Kingsthorpe College to work with leaders at Lumbertubs Primary as a partner academy to further develop leadership and management.