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Marie-Claire Bretherton
Benjamin Adlard Primary School
Sandsfield Road
Gainsborough
DN21 1DB

Dear Mrs Bretherton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Benjamin Adlard Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24–25 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers, provided that they receive support from the Kyra Teaching School Alliance or from the other partner schools in the trust.

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 Rapid Improvement Board and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Also copied to:

- CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do, especially the most-able pupils
 - all teachers regularly checking throughout their lessons that different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making sufficient progress and, if necessary, adapting the tasks given
 - providing pupils with focused guidance in marking on how to improve the quality of their work.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - resolving the issue of the permanent leadership of the academy and distributing leadership responsibilities more evenly throughout the staff
 - developing the support and challenge roles of the members of the Rapid Improvement Board who are not members of the academy's staff
 - making sure information about pupils' achievement is accurate and the systems for tracking progress are efficient
 - ensuring that leaders check more often that pupils' work is of a high quality and provide teachers with written feedback to help them improve their teaching
 - helping subject leaders to make an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.

- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - improving pupils' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects
 - developing pupils' calculation skills, including their knowledge of multiplication facts
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to use and apply numeracy skills in different contexts, including problem-solving.

- An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 24–25 November 2015.

Evidence

During my inspection, I met with you, the head of school and other senior leaders, the subject leaders for mathematics and English and the Chair of the Rapid Improvement Board. I spoke formally with pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 and informally with others at break and lunchtimes. I reviewed a range of documentation, including: the academy's development plan; self-evaluation documents; minutes of the Rapid Improvement Board; external reviews of governance and pupil premium; records of monitoring and evaluation; behaviour and bullying logs; safeguarding and attendance records; and information about the attainment and progress of pupils across the school. I observed learning in a range of classes; some were observed jointly with the head of school. Together with the head of school, I looked at the quality of work in pupils' books.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the head of school has taken up post, and the leadership team been restructured. One new senior leader has been appointed with responsibility for Key Stage 1 and for raising the achievement of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, those who have English as an additional language and those who are looked after. The English and mathematics leaders have taken on responsibility for developing teaching in Key Stage 2 between them. One member of staff is currently on long-term absence.

Outcomes for pupils

The latest information for 2015 shows that different groups of pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6 achieved much higher standards than in the previous year. These pupils began Key Stage 2 with levels of prior attainment that were well below the national average; some joined the class part way through the year. The proportion who reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics combined rose considerably to be broadly in line with the national average. The proportions who made expected, and more than expected progress in both reading and mathematics were above national averages. In writing, this measure remained below the national average, but showed considerable improvement on the previous year. Disadvantaged pupils made more progress than their peers and others nationally in mathematics, and in reading they made the same rate of progress as others nationally. Pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling, although improving, remain significantly below average.

Outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were less favourable, with pupils' attainment overall being well below average for their age across all subjects. These pupils faced considerable barriers to their learning, and many of them have significant learning difficulties. While a majority of them had made good progress

from low starting points, there is more to do to ensure that these pupils continue to have the support they need to catch up.

The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) rose from the previous year to be above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who did so was also above the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage made good rates of progress overall and as a result were well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Observations in lessons and a scrutiny of books showed that current pupils are making at least expected progress in a range of classes and subjects. Predictions for outcomes for the current Year 6 class are cautious as the academy moves to a new system of assessment. These will be examined in more detail on the next visit. Leaders are aware that, in order to sustain the improvements in pupils' outcomes, teaching in all classes must be consistently good.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching continues to improve. In the lessons visited, teaching was generally lively, capturing pupils' interest and developing their skills and understanding well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils had excitedly gathered materials from outdoors to add to their clay models of tree monsters or 'boggarts'. They were encouraged to use their imaginations to describe how their boggarts might be feeling and how they would show this.

Teachers often provide individual feedback to pupils in class to ensure that they have fully understood the learning and know how to move on. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on chronological reporting, pupils made good progress in their understanding of syntax as a result of the teacher's careful explanations to individual pupils and colour coding of the parts of a sentence. In most examples seen, teachers' written feedback pinpointed what pupils needed to do to improve their work. This was not consistent across all classes, however.

Following effective external support and internal moderating, teachers are developing a better understanding of how to use the new assessment system to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are quickly picked up and addressed. Teachers are now working more effectively with teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils make better progress. In the best examples seen, teachers and teaching assistants swap seamlessly to support different groups of pupils, while others take turns to work independently. This good practice is not yet widespread across all classes.

There are now more opportunities to practise writing at length in different subjects. For example, as part of their topic on the 'Scented Garden', Year 2 pupils wrote vivid accounts of their visit to a florist. Pupils who spoke with me told me how much they are enjoying the new 'reading corners' in their classrooms, and the wider range of

books they can now choose from. The investment that you have made in reading materials is ensuring that pupils from the reception class up are developing a love of reading.

Calculation skills are now being developed more widely across the curriculum; for example, pupils in Year 5 plotted graphs to show the temperature range in Egypt. However, there is more to do to ensure that pupils in all classes have opportunities to practise the precise skills in both English and mathematics that will ensure that their achievement continues to improve.

Teachers are becoming more adept in using questioning effectively, and in using pupils' misconceptions to develop their understanding. This was skilfully done by the Year 6 teacher who shared one pupil's incorrect graph work with the class, who then worked out together what had gone wrong. There is more to do to ensure that the more-able pupils in all classes are consistently challenged, both through teachers' questioning of them and by the work they do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the previous inspection, the new head of school has worked with staff, parents and pupils to draw up and implement a new behaviour policy. This policy makes clear the high expectations that all staff should have for pupils' behaviour and gives staff clear guidance on rewarding and reinforcing positive behaviour. As a consequence, behaviour is rapidly improving. In the lessons visited, teachers were consistent in ensuring that the 'Golden Rules' were followed and behaviour charts were being well used to encourage pupils to make the right choices. Routines for lining up and coming in at the end of break and lunchtimes are much more consistently enforced, so that lessons get off to a better start, and are calmer and more purposeful. Pupils now have a greater range of activities to occupy them at lunchtime and as a result, there is less boisterous play on the playground. There are now greater opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting competitions outside school. These events are helping to raise the profile of the academy in the local community and are creating a greater sense of team spirit among staff and pupils.

The presentation of pupils' work has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils use the new 'dumtums' rule (date, underline, miss a line, title, underline, miss a line) to ensure that each piece of work is well presented. In the vast majority of examples seen, teachers consistently ensured that these rules were applied and that nothing but the best was accepted from pupils. These changes, along with new uniform purchased for pupils, are resulting in a new-found sense of pride among pupils. Asked whether they thought their academy had improved, their response was clear: 'by about a thousand miles'.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new head of school has been instrumental in bringing much-needed stability to the academy. Teachers and leaders at all levels share a greater sense of purpose and determination, and are clearer about their roles in ensuring that standards rise. As one teacher put it, 'he has made us believe we can do it.'

Your action plans have been carefully monitored and evaluated and these show that, as a result of the greater capacity you now have, you are making much better progress against them. You have developed self-evaluation documents for each area of the academy's plan, and these ensure that you, other leaders and governors keep a very close eye on the progress being made. As a result, the rate of improvement has accelerated since the previous inspection.

A rigorous programme of quality assurance ensures that leaders are well informed about the quality of teaching across the school and use this information to drive improvement. For example, the development of the 'teacher tracker' has enabled leaders to pinpoint precisely the elements of teaching that need to improve; these are checked again in the next round of monitoring and are used to determine the training and support that teachers receive. This system has been key in ensuring that teaching in all classes is quickly improving.

The work of subject leaders is now more effective. For example, both the English and mathematics leaders have drawn up medium-term plans that highlight where grammar and calculation skills respectively could be taught in different classes, and teachers are using these plans to introduce these skills into the topic work. These leaders are now carrying out their own monitoring work, and are using their findings to ensure that teachers know how to improve their practice.

You have now appointed leaders to take responsibility for the different key stages. It is too soon to fully judge the impact of their work, but this will be checked at the next visit.

Your work to engage parents in the life of the academy is now proving effective. Parents I spoke with told me that they find the new head of school to be very approachable, and they are very grateful for the support that their children receive; support that is often extended to families. Many more of them are now attending parents' evenings and a steady few attend the parental forums you have set up. Although there were relatively few responses to Parent View, the overwhelming majority who did respond would now recommend this school to other parents.

Safeguarding leaders work effectively together to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the help and support they need. They are tenacious in dealing with the local authority and other agencies to make sure that referrals are quickly followed up.

The Rapid Improvement Board has drawn up its own action plan as a result of the external review of governance that was carried out after the last inspection. They have used the findings to identify any gaps in their skills and to ensure that all governors play an equal part in holding you and other leaders to account. From my review of their minutes, it was clear that they are now more consistent in challenging you and other leaders about the improvement the school is making.

External support

You have previously received support from a specialist leader of education from the Kyra Teaching School Alliance. This has now been withdrawn as the academy has better capacity to improve teaching from within. However, you continue to receive support from the Kyra Teaching School Alliance and have worked with teachers and leaders from across the trust to develop and implement the new assessment system. The trust has supported the academy financially with the secondment of an additional assistant headteacher.