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Helen Shepherd  
Headteacher  
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Ashbourne Road  
Derby  
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Dear Mrs Shepherd

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Royal School for the Deaf Derby**

Following my visit with Susan Wood, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 20 January 2016, 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:

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

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher (NQT) before the next monitoring inspection. No other NQTs should be appointed prior to the next monitoring inspection without my agreement.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Education Funding Agency, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Trustees and the Director of Children's Services for Derby City.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- As a matter of urgency, improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of pupils, by:
  - ensuring governors fulfil their statutory duty to keep children safe in school,
  - ensuring governors hold the school's leaders to account for the safeguarding of pupils
  - completing a full audit of all aspects of the school's work around safeguarding and ensure swift action is taken to deal with omissions and breaches
  - implementing a safeguarding policy and other key policies that specifically meet the needs of the pupils attending the school
  - ensuring there is a clear system in place to check pupils' non-attendance is recorded, followed up swiftly and closely monitored
  - completing a full and comprehensive safety audit of the site, taking immediate action to make safe any issues identified
  - ensuring all safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously by all staff.
  
- Further develop leadership and management by:
  - making sure that leaders at all levels have the knowledge, skills and time to fulfil their roles and are held accountable for their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring that all governors hold school leaders to account rigorously for the achievement of pupils
  - effectively monitoring and accurately evaluating all aspects of the school's work in order to plan and implement the necessary improvements
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels have an accurate and informed view of pupils' progress.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, by:
  - ensuring that teachers take pupils' starting points into account when planning lessons so that work is more closely matched to their learning needs
  - sharing the good and outstanding practice that already exists in the school
  - making sure that pupils understand their targets and know how to improve their work
  - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
  - providing greater challenge for pupils.
  
- Improve provision in the sixth form by:
  - ensuring that leaders have an accurate and informed view of students' progress when in school and when at alternative provision
  - providing students with accurate information on how to improve their work.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on safeguarding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 20 January 2016.**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. Inspectors made brief visits to classrooms and spoke informally with pupils at lunchtime. This one day monitoring inspection focused on the effectiveness of leadership and governance and, in particular, on how well leaders and governors are ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are secure and effective.

### **Context**

The acting principal, in post at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, has been appointed as the substantive headteacher. Two new deputy headteachers and two new assistant headteachers have also been appointed. A new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have been elected. One governor has left and another has joined the governing body.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

A strong focus on the teaching of basic skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics is helping pupils to make better progress in these areas. For example, in the early years class, children thoroughly enjoyed buying food in the role play shop. The teacher then encouraged pupils to count out how many items they had purchased. Some pupils were able to count and accurately record the different items they had chosen. In the Year 2 class, most pupils were able to correctly write three digit numbers and were able to demonstrate their developing understanding of place-value.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. Teachers provide a good level of challenge, including for the most-able pupils, and this is helping them to make better progress. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, adults were challenging pupils to use more ambitious and interesting word choices in their writing. In a Year 10 class, the teacher was checking that pupils understood how to use punctuation correctly in order to identify a clause within a sentence.

All the pupils who left the school last year either gained employment or went on to further education or training.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Leaders have made certain that when teachers plan sequences of lessons, they carefully consider pupils' different starting points and build on these so that work is more closely matched to their learning needs. For example, teachers are now using information from pupils' individual language profiles more effectively in order to make sure that pupils' communication needs are met. Teachers ensure that there is an appropriate balance between English and British Sign Language in each lesson, which suits the needs of different pupils. Teachers are also using information about pupils' reading ages more effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in their reading skills and to inform teaching.

Pupils told the inspector that they think teaching is getting better. They said that teachers challenge them more and help them to understand how they can do even better. The inspector agrees. During the inspection, teachers and teaching assistants used effective questioning to check on pupils' understanding during lessons and encourage them to think more deeply or improve their work.

Leaders and teachers are now rightly focusing on improving the school's systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in relation to their starting points and to national expectations for their age. Leaders are ensuring that teachers have more opportunities to work with colleagues in school, and from other schools, to check the accuracy of their judgements about the standard of pupils' work.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils' behaviour has continued to improve. During the inspection, pupils moved calmly and safely around the school buildings and grounds. Pupils socialised and played co-operatively with one another at lunchtime. Levels of supervision were appropriate and a suitable range of activities, including sports, were available to pupils after they had finished eating their lunch.

In lessons, pupils paid attention to their teachers and were proud when adults congratulated them for a well thought-out answer or for persevering with a challenging task.

The school's systems for checking on absent pupils are now well established and effective. The large majority of pupils attend school regularly. Leaders make checks on the attendance of different groups of pupils and if an individual pupil's attendance dips, they explore the reasons for this and work with parents to reduce absence.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher has a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas which must be improved. The headteacher and governors, supported well by the school improvement partner, are building a new, stronger

leadership structure and team. New leaders have been carefully selected for their different complementary skills and expertise. For example, one of the new deputy headteachers has extensive experience in safeguarding and promoting pupil well-being, while the second has proven skills in improving teaching and in assessing pupils' achievement. All the new leaders have job descriptions which clearly set out their roles and responsibilities. This means that governors are more able to hold leaders to account for their work.

Leaders and governors have rightly focused on ensuring that robust policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. The named governor for safeguarding has attended training to ensure that he is familiar with governors' statutory responsibilities. He makes frequent visits to school to check that safeguarding practice matches current requirements. For example, he checks that all the right checks are made on staff prior to appointment. He has also ensured that the school's updated safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and that all staff follow the procedures set out in it. Governors have made sure that staff have received training to help them identify pupils who may be a risk, for example from radicalisation or online exploitation.

Leaders have improved the ways that staff keep records of any significant incidents which occur in school or in the residences regarding pupils' behaviour or well-being. The deputy headteacher responsible for pupil welfare has ensured that there is better communication between the school and the residences. This means that important information is recorded and shared so that pupils are better supported and their behaviour is managed more consistently.

Leaders retain suitably detailed records of any safeguarding concerns raised by staff about pupils. They record the action that has been taken, including any referrals to the local authority, and keep records of their work with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. However, while all of these records are kept securely, they are in different files, which means that it is difficult to follow the chronology of events and actions for individual pupils. It is also difficult for leaders to efficiently check that all planned actions have been taken and that pupils have received timely support. Leaders recognise this and plan to reorganise their recording systems so that they can more readily check that nothing has been missed.

Leaders and governors have updated a number of school policies to ensure that they reflect current requirements and guidance. The policies that have been updated, including the behaviour policy and the staff code of conduct, are comprehensive and detailed. However, leaders and governors have not ensured that the school website fully complies with the Department for Education's requirements. One significant oversight is the lack of a special educational needs information report.

The governing body has carried out a check on the skills and expertise of every governor. They have then used this information to recruit additional governors with

complementary knowledge and skills. Since the full inspection in February 2015, governors have understandably focused first on ensuring that pupils are safe, and on recruiting effective leaders. They now recognise the urgent need to ensure that teaching across the school is at least good so that pupils in every key stage make good progress from their different starting points. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show that governors are now asking more questions about teaching and learning and are requesting additional information to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

The headteacher and governors know that they do not receive pupil premium funding for all eligible pupils and are following this up with the relevant local authorities. Governors have not checked carefully enough how this well this group of pupils are doing in comparison to other pupils in the schools. They are therefore unable to ensure that the funding they do receive is targeted on narrowing gaps for eligible pupils.

The headteacher and other leaders make regular visits to lessons and look at the work in pupils' books in order to evaluate the quality of teaching. Teachers are given clear guidance on how they should improve their work, but leaders do not routinely check to see if the required improvements are being made.

The very recently appointed deputy headteacher, responsible for teaching, learning and assessment, is developing new systems to help teachers across the school to check more effectively on pupils' attainment and progress. Although this work is in its early stages, the new system enables teachers to record and evaluate the progress of individual pupils and identify next steps for teaching and learning. It will also allow teachers and leaders to check how well pupils are doing in relation to national expectations for pupils of the same age. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do before they and governors are able to robustly evaluate the achievement of pupils in each key stage.

### **External support**

The school purchases a package of support from Derby local authority. This includes regular visits from a school improvement partner (SIP). The SIP has effectively supported the headteacher and governors in developing a new leadership structure for the school. She has worked with the headteacher to ensure that each leader has clearly defined roles and responsibilities so that they can be better supported as well as held accountable for their areas of responsibility. The school also accesses local authority guidance and training for governors. This support has helped governors to become more effective in holding leaders to account for their work and in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective.