

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



27 April 2016

Mr Robert Litten  
Executive headteacher  
New Road Primary School  
New Road  
Whittlesey  
Peterborough  
Cambridgeshire  
PE7 1SZ

Dear Mr Litten

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of New Road Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19–20 April 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 that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2015.

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 trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2015.**

- Improve teaching so that the progress of all groups of pupils accelerates in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - written feedback to pupils helps them to improve their work, including their spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - teachers and support staff have high expectations of what all pupils can do and achieve
  - teachers and support staff understand the new assessment arrangements and make accurate and reliable judgements about pupils' attainment and what they need to learn next.
  
- Raise standards for all groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs, so that they are prepared for the next stage of their education by:
  - increasing the level of challenge so that pupils produce work of a high standard
  - ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils so that it is relevant, demanding and prepares them for life in modern Britain
  - reviewing the way phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading are taught across the school to have the maximum impact on developing pupils' reading skills
  - making sure all pupils have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their skills in mathematics.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that:
  - leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and enable staff to tackle any weaknesses rapidly
  - leaders ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and met fully and that they measure the impact of the support they receive
  - governors find out for themselves how well the school is doing in order to question and challenge the information they receive from senior leaders
  - leaders and governors sharpen up the school's systems for reviewing pupils' progress with teachers and the pupils themselves
  - subject leaders take an active role in bringing about rapid improvement in their subject areas
  - the school's website fully complies with government regulations.

- Reduce absence for all groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, by:
  - keeping records of the absence rates of different key groups of pupils
  - raising the profile of the importance of good attendance with families and pupils
  - acting swiftly to challenge poor attendance.

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 first monitoring inspection on 19 to 20 April 2016**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) observed teaching and learning in all classes twice, jointly with the executive headteacher. She met with trustees, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, three parent governors and the incoming executive principal of the new trust. Meetings were held with all of the teachers as a group and individual discussions were held with the assistant headteacher and the new coordinator of special needs (SENCo). HMI met with eight pupils from the Year 5/6 class. She scrutinised documents, checked the school's website information and discussed the school's most recent information about pupils' learning.

### **Context**

In February 2016, the Whittlesea Learning Trust passed a resolution for the school to transfer to a new sponsor, Sir Harry Smith Academy Trust, from July 2016. Two governors from Sir Harry Smith Academy Trust attend all meetings of the governing body to ensure a smooth transition. The interim board of directors is responsible for ensuring that all of the necessary legal requirements are in place by July 2016. The SENCo has resigned and a new lead for special needs has been appointed. One teacher has left since the last inspection and been replaced with a new teacher who is leader in the early years. The school is increasing its admissions number from 20 to 30 pupils from September 2016 creating, in the first instance, one more class.

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

Leaders and managers at all levels are driving forward improvements determinedly. They are tackling recommendations from the previous inspection systematically. A sustained focus on teaching and learning, threaded through all strands of leadership and management, is beginning to show impact on raising pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. The executive headteacher communicates strong ambition for pupils to be successful in their learning. He possesses unwavering confidence that New Road pupils are capable of matching or exceeding national expectations for pupil progress and attainment. This is not yet realised for all pupils, but a positive start is evident.

Senior leaders and governors are usefully checking the quality of teaching and learning at regular intervals to identify strengths and weaknesses. Even so, they have not observed the work of teaching assistants frequently enough to assure the quality of the teaching. Teachers are keen to improve their practice and accept that they are accountable for the progress that pupils make. Staff are committed to making improvements. They work together effectively as a team and staffing is stable. Leaders draw upon a range of evidence to evaluate teaching and learning by: observing them in action, checking pupils' written work for evidence of progress, talking to pupils and analysing the results of tests and other assessments. The

school now has a secure system for recording and tracking the progress that all pupils are making that is understood by teachers and governors. Staff are now able to see at a glance where individuals or groups of pupils are not making enough progress so that action can be taken quickly to get them back on track.

Governance has improved. An external review of governance provided the governing body with a series of recommendations to work on to strengthen its ability to challenge as well as support the school. Similarly, outcomes of the external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding have been taken on board. Governors are checking the impact of this spending on improving outcomes for the disadvantaged pupils it is intended for.

Visits by governors to see teaching and learning at first hand are frequent. These provide governors with valuable information about pupils' learning. They are now in a better position to ask pertinent questions or to ask for more information if need be. In this way, governors are beginning to form an independent view of the school's work to confirm what the executive headteacher tells them. While this is a significant improvement, the trust's statement of action and the school's improvement planning are not useful documents to help leaders to drive forward improvements. The criteria set to measure progress against agreed actions to address each area for improvement in the recent section 5 report are too broad to be measured accurately. Deadlines for the completion of tasks are not set with checks at intervals to ensure that they are met on time. This has led to some slippage. For example, the school's website still does not meet statutory requirements. The governing body has ensured that parents have been informed about the school's imminent change of sponsor and what that means.

Leadership at all levels is strengthening. The assistant headteacher, who leads on English, has had an impact on improving pupils' achievement in reading. She also leads on aspects of pupils' personal development, behaviour, safety and welfare. In particular, she is steadily developing the skills of lunchtime supervisors in managing pupils' behaviour and encouraging their participation in positive play. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability have not made enough progress from their starting points at the beginning of the school year. The new SENCo is undertaking a review to establish how best to tackle this and she has the qualifications, skills and experience to move this forward. Staff with subject responsibilities are monitoring pupils' learning in each subject. They are developing systems for assessing how well pupils are performing. These are not as sophisticated as those for English and mathematics but they show what pupils know and can do and, importantly, what they need to learn next. The curriculum is under review to improve it by ensuring that pupils are learning all that they should. This is work in progress. Pupils are being taught the full range of subjects but planning for learning does not yet extend beyond this term.

The executive headteacher has addressed the previously very poor attendance of pupils very successfully. Current attendance figures are close to average and show a

remarkable improvement of 3.8 percentage points from the same period last year. Parents and pupils are very clear what the school's expectations are for good attendance and why. Pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should are monitored closely. If necessary, to improve attendance, the school uses its legal authority to issue parents with a fixed penalty notice.

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

In response to the executive headteacher's high expectations, teachers are expecting more from pupils. Older pupils confirmed that they are finding the work more challenging. Relationships in classrooms are strong and promote confidence in pupils to learn. Adults manage behaviour well in class. No learning time is lost through poor behaviour or low-level disruption.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Teaching is planned in advance so that pupils learn new skills in the right order. Use of assessment information to prepare work at the right level of difficulty is improving. The match of the work to pupils' differing needs and abilities remains variable in its precision. Sometimes teaching does not move learning forward quickly enough. For example, pupils might linger for too long on an activity and lose interest, or the most-able pupils work through a series of short learning steps when they are capable of striding ahead.

The school's chosen method of assessing what pupils know and can do is efficient and understood by staff and governors. Teachers have confidence in the system. They check their assessments with teachers in other local schools to ensure that the judgements are reliable. The school's chosen method of translating national curriculum statements for what pupils should learn in English and mathematics into numerical terms is used effectively to measure progress. Teaching assistants working with individual pupils to fill gaps in learning is helping them to catch up. However, some of the extra teaching for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has not been as successful in accelerating their progress.

The systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is improving strongly. Teachers are using a wide range of approaches and resources that hold pupils' attention, capture their interest and make learning fun. They ensure that pupils read, say, write and use new words in context to deepen understanding. Pupils are receiving useful verbal and written feedback about their work. Teachers are correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately in their marking to improve pupils' accuracy. Pupils are also encouraged to contribute in setting the criteria for success in their writing so that they can check to see if they are meeting the requirements. These approaches are making a big difference in improving the quality of pupils' written work. Teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils apply the skills they have learned to solve problems regularly.

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

In class, pupils show that they are keen and ready to learn. Their attitudes to learning are positive. They respond quickly to adults' instructions and advice. Pupils are polite and respectful in their interactions with adults. Older pupils recognise and welcome the fact that work in class is more challenging and that they are expected to work harder. They also know that attendance in the school has improved significantly and understand the importance of attending school regularly. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know what it means to be a good person but they do not know what the fundamental British values are. Most pupils play happily, sensibly and safely at breaktimes. However, a few boys were observed being too boisterous, triggering heated disagreements.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Pupils' prior underachievement resulted in unacceptably low starting points at the start of this school year. The gap between where pupils are and where they should be in relation to national expectations is narrowing. With better teaching, most pupils are catching up rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment information indicates that most Year 6 pupils are on track to reach or exceed the standards expected for their age in the national tests in May this year. In other year groups, most pupils' attainment, as seen in their books, should be in line with the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of this term.

Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their classmates. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making slower progress than other pupils. The younger pupils are showing that they are able to use their phonics knowledge to break words down into shorter sounds so that they can read them. The school has purchased new books that appeal to pupils. This has helped to promote an increasing desire in pupils to read and enjoy books regularly across the school. While the content of pupils' written work is improving, their handwriting is poor. Many pupils in key stage 2 are not forming letters correctly or joining them so that they are able to write quickly and neatly.

### **External support**

The school draws upon the expertise of a range of professionals to support staff in improvement work. Advisers for the early years, literacy and numeracy have made a positive contribution in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Staff have benefited from the opportunity to draw upon the expertise of colleagues in the Whittlesea Learning Trust's sister school. The SENCo is already working with the special needs lead at Sir Harry Smith Academy to secure a smooth transfer to secondary school for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The school actively promotes working alongside colleagues in other local schools. This has been effective, for example, in securing the accuracy of assessment information.