

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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28 June 2016

Mr Matthew Wynne  
Headteacher  
Windale Community Primary School  
Windale Avenue  
Blackbird Leys  
Oxford  
Oxfordshire  
OX4 6JD

Dear Mr Wynne

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Windale Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 June 2016 with Francois Walker, Ofsted Inspector, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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 school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board (IEB), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for

Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve teaching so that it is always good by making sure that:
  - expectations of what pupils can achieve are raised and work set is more challenging to help them make faster progress
  - pupils are given work that motivates them to learn well and make good progress
  - pupils have time to respond to marking and improve or finish their work, so that they are helped to make better progress.
  
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders, including trustees, regularly make sure that all agreed actions are having the required impact on the achievement of different groups of pupils, on improving the quality of teaching and on pupils' behaviour
  - trustees use their skills to challenge school leaders effectively and to hold the school to account for improving standards
  - assessment information about pupils' different starting points and the progress they have made is used by all teachers and teaching assistants to plan pupils' learning across the school, including in the early years
  - training and development is given to new and existing subject leaders so that they secure good-quality teaching and pupil achievement in their areas of responsibility.
  
- Increase achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) throughout the school, including in the early years
  - checking frequently that pupils understand the key mathematical operations and that they build on their knowledge and skills to make more rapid progress
  - ensuring that pupils are taught the basic skills of English grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their writing skills
  - making sure that pupils are provided with planned opportunities to practise and use their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics across all subjects.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by ensuring that the school's behaviour management policies and practices are consistently applied and have a positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium

should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 June 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents relating to improvement, pupils' progress and safety, external support, and the school's own monitoring and evaluation of its work. Inspectors met with the interim headteacher, the senior leadership team, a group of staff, informally with parents, and with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6, whom they heard read. An inspector made a phone call to the chair of the interim executive board (IEB) who is also a trustee, and met with two other trustees, including a representative from the organisation sponsoring the school. Inspectors made two short visits to classrooms; the first was unaccompanied, to observe behaviour, and the second was to observe phonics (the sounds that letters make). Inspectors observed teaching, learning, and assessment in all year groups, often accompanied by the school's leaders (during which they scrutinised pupils' work). They undertook a tour of the school, guided by pupils, and a separate scrutiny of pupils' work.

During this visit, the area for development relating to subject leadership was not focused on due to the changes in subject leadership that are currently underway. This area for improvement will, however, be a focus in the next monitoring visit.

### **Context**

The executive headteacher leaves at the end of the current term. In addition, a new headteacher has been appointed who will replace the current interim headteacher in November 2016. Five new members of staff have been appointed, including literacy and numeracy subject leaders as well as other subject leaders. They will join the school in September 2016.

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

Recently, the IEB has stepped up the level of challenge it provides and has been much more rigorous. As a result, there have been substantial changes to the senior leadership of the school. At the same time, the trustees and the IEB have supported the school well by ensuring that the school is fully staffed for September. They have made better use of the combined resources of the multi-academy trust (MAT) to achieve this. The IEB is very meticulous in the checks it makes on pupils' progress. On occasion, it has requested that leaders redouble their efforts to support pupils whose progress is not as strong as others. This tighter and sharper approach has had a positive impact on the school. Better progress is leading to improved attainment. IEB members, trustees, and leaders are fully aware that pupils who have very low starting points (and have experienced weak historic teaching) need to make rapid progress to catch up with others nationally. This has been their guiding

principle. The trustees have contributed well to this goal, securing funding for additional teachers to support pupils, in particular in mathematics, and in all subjects in Year 3. Under the continued strong direction of the interim headteacher, who has very effectively prioritised the areas that need developing, the school has steadily improved.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- The interim headteacher has further strengthened the way the school's work is monitored and evaluated. Leaders now more rigorously evaluate the impact of changed approaches to teaching. In particular, checks made on teaching are wide-ranging. They include scrutinies of pupils' work and feedback from pupils, as well as observations of teaching. This means leaders and IEB members have as detailed a picture as possible of where strengths and weaknesses lie.
- Leaders' checks link very well to a programme of training, so any areas that need further development can be focused on through additional help and guidance. Following additional training, leaders sensibly make further checks to ensure that teachers are making full use of the guidance they have been given and it is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The leader responsible for inclusion works very effectively to ensure that each pupil receives the support they need to succeed at the school. Pupils access a wide range of academic help, which includes additional learning in small groups, with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The inclusion leader has systematically developed the skills of teaching assistants. Consequently, they are able to deliver a wide range of special programmes, including those designed to help pupils communicate better and manage any negative emotions more effectively.
- The phase leader for the early years has made a series of changes that have improved children's development and learning at the setting. These have led to better outcomes and an increased proportion of pupils are on target to achieve a good level of development, despite their low starting points.
- Leaders' actions have led to further improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. In particular, leaders meticulously analysed information on incidents of poor behaviour around the school. They sensibly identified hot-spots (times and places when there is a higher incidence of poor behaviour). Leaders have now effectively limited these hot-spots by planning additional activities, and ensuring areas of the site are even better supervised.
- All leaders, including the interim headteacher, are highly visible. They take every opportunity available to praise encourage, support and, where necessary, challenge pupils. Parents and carers value leaders' accessibility.

## **Weaknesses in the school's approach to securing improvement**

- The development of subject leadership has not been as effective as other aspects. Currently there are no non-core subject leaders in place and the leadership of numeracy needs further development. Although the leader responsible for literacy has developed writing, there is more work to be done. Leaders have plans in place to improve subject leadership. The impact of these plans will be a focus in the next monitoring visit.
- In some classes and in some subjects, gaps remain too wide between disadvantaged pupils and others. IEB members and leaders need to monitor the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils more rigorously to ensure that it has a more positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The school has sensibly commissioned a review of pupil premium spending in order to improve this aspect of its work.

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

The quality of teaching, including additional small-group teaching, has continued to improve, especially in mathematics, reading, and phonics. A greater proportion of planned learning is now appropriately pitched, including in the early years setting. However, teaching in writing is weaker in lower key stage 2 and top key stage 1 classes. In addition, teaching in some non-core subjects such as history and science, despite some improvements, remains too variable.

Senior leaders' focused checks on teaching have led to improvements. Now teachers plan learning that enables pupils to gain the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to progress in reading and mathematics and, in older years, in writing. Pupils have developed their mathematical reasoning skills and are able to apply their learning to solve mathematical word problems. Most pupils work well on the more challenging tasks teachers now set for them which enable them to gain mastery of key concepts. In Years 5 and 6, pupils choose their own level of challenge. This approach is working more effectively than hitherto because teachers carefully check that pupils are pushing themselves so they make rapid progress. One pupil told inspectors, 'If you choose something too easy you will be told to choose something harder'. In most, but not all cases, pupils make effective use of equipment to help them visualise key concepts. Teaching in reading has also developed. Pupils are now better able to answer the complex questions that teachers now pose about the books they read, including ones that require pupils to evaluate how well the story is written.

Teaching in the early years setting has developed well. The leader has restructured the weekly learning schedule in the setting. Consequently, there are now more opportunities for children to work with staff to develop literacy and numeracy skills through small-group work. Children in early years are making strong progress in phonics through the more systematic way in which it is taught in the setting. Now that the assistants are fully trained, they make a much more effective contribution

to the teaching of phonics. As a consequence, a higher proportion of children than last year are on track to meet age-related expectations in phonics.

Progress in writing is more variable. Some pupils make effective use of examples of different types of writing that teachers share with them. They are, consequently, now clearer about how writing styles differ and how best to structure their own writing. However, in some classes, teachers' feedback does not always support pupils in using their grammatical knowledge to make their writing more effective. Teachers do not always plan opportunities for pupils to write at length in the different subjects they learn. Some pupils' spelling is weak because they do not apply their phonics knowledge when they spell words with regular patterns.

Teaching in non-core subjects has not improved as much as in core subjects. In 'topic', some teachers miss opportunities to extend pupils' subject knowledge and to reinforce basic skills, such as the ability to explain ideas in writing clearly. For example, in a key stage 2 class, facts about the Battle of Hastings were displayed and the teacher read them out. However, the activity did not develop pupils' ability to interpret facts and acquire the skills of a historian. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils have got the knowledge and skills that might be expected for their age in non-core subjects. The school has robust plans in place to improve this next term.

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

The effective and consistent use of sanctions and rewards and better tracking of incidents of inappropriate behaviour have led to further improvements in pupils' attitude and conduct. Pupils now participate positively in lessons, taking more responsibility for their own learning and exhibiting enthusiasm for it. One pupil commented about a planned trip to Stratford, 'I can't wait to learn more about Shakespeare'. However, on occasions, where pupils are not required to work hard, they become less focused and can distract themselves and others. Parents, carers and pupils commented to inspectors that they were pleased with improvements in behaviour.

Attendance has improved from last year and is now just below average. Attendance figures for the school are affected by the low attendance figures for Reception. This was due to a bout of highly infectious illnesses, including Scarlet Fever. The parent partnership coordinator has successfully supported parents in their efforts to improve the attendance of their youngsters. Being highly visible at the start and end of the day has enabled positive relationships with parents and carers to be built-up quickly. As a result, gaps between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and others, and pupils who have special educational needs or disability and others, have narrowed. In addition, pupils are now more punctual because class rewards for punctuality provide an effective incentive.

The leader responsible for inclusion has developed a raft of well-planned, bespoke

interventions that support pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions, communicate, and socialise. The school has also provided targeted pupils with a nurture room, which they make good use of during unstructured times. In addition, leaders carefully track incidents of poor behaviour and analyse this information to identify hot-spots. They have successfully reduced the number of hot-spots by providing additional clubs and more supervision. Consequently, incidents of serious misbehaviour have drastically reduced. There have been no fixed-term exclusions since the autumn term and the number of occasions when pupils are excluded from class and spend time working in isolation in the school has also significantly reduced.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Improved teaching, including small-group teaching and additional one-to-one support is leading to stronger progress across the school. This in turn has improved attainment. However, improvements in attainment are not yet consistent across all classes and year groups. Consequently, in Year 3 the proportion of pupils on track to meet national expectations remains too low. In addition, pupils' achievement in writing is weaker than in mathematics and reading, especially in lower key stage 2 classes and in key stage 1 classes. Better teaching means the proportion of pupils meeting age-related expectations in upper key stage 2 has improved and is broadly in line with the national average. Predictions show a slightly higher proportion of pupils than last year reaching age-related expectations in their combined scores for reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 tests and assessments. This is despite the increased challenge in the tests and pupils' low starting points. In addition, a significantly higher proportion of pupils than last year are predicted to meet age-related expectations in key stage 1 assessments. The school's predictions are based on assessments that are checked for accuracy with other academies in the MAT and with schools outside the MAT.

Changes to the provision in the early years, including additional reading practice before the start of the school day have been successful. Consequently, the proportion of children on track to reach a good level of development has improved. It stands at 60%, which is 6% below the national average for 2015. This indicates effective progress because when these children started, only one fifth had the levels of development expected for their age. Developments in the teaching of phonics mean that just over 70% of pupils in Year 1 are on track to achieve the expected standard in the screening test. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are also predicted to narrow in the screening check this year. This shows improvement on 2015 results and strong progress from starting points that were lower than average. However, it still means one third of pupils may enter Year 2 without the expected reading skills and, therefore, less able to access the curriculum.

Across the school, although there are pockets of strong progress in writing, it is generally less rapid than pupils' progress in other subjects. This is especially the

case in lower key stage 2 and key stage 1 classes. This is because pupils are not always making good use of their phonics knowledge, especially knowledge of patterns in spelling, when they write. In addition, not enough focus is placed on ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to write in different styles and forms in 'topic' lessons. Consequently, writing remains too variable across the school.

Pupils with higher levels of additional needs are effectively assisted by well-monitored and tightly planned programmes of additional support. However, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability remains too variable and, in particular, they are making less strong progress than others in Year 2, in all subjects, and in Year 5. Disadvantaged pupils now make better progress; however, in Years 1 and 2, their progress is not as strong as others. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress in writing in lower key stage 2 and key stage 1 remains too variable.

### **External support**

As the school has improved, leaders have been more selective about the external support they have utilised. They have sensibly commissioned support from a local teaching school to help improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The package of support includes a review of the impact of pupil premium funding, scheduled to take place in the near future. The senior leadership team have also benefited from guidance provided by a leadership consultant. Leaders have employed this effectively when providing robust feedback to teachers on their performance. The Hamilton Trust, which is one of the school's sponsors, has supported the school by providing an additional mathematics teacher. This has contributed to ensuring that pupils are developing effective methods of carrying out mathematical processes. Recent training on numeracy provided by the sponsor was not well attended. This has played a part in a number of staff feeling unclear about the school's chosen approach to teaching mathematics.