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Mr David Budge
Acting Headteacher
Chadsmead Primary Academy
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Dear Mr Budge

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chadsmead Primary Academy

Following my visit with Kathryn Hanson, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 28–29 June 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 November 2015.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action 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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2015.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all statutory safeguarding requirements are fully in place, staff training is up to date and all staff know who to talk to if they have any safeguarding concerns
 - a package is urgently put in place for the current Year 6 pupils to ensure they receive strong, consistent teaching which will help prepare them for Year 7
 - managers have the necessary skills to lead improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils, such as those with disabilities or special educational needs, looked after and disadvantaged pupils
 - communication on all levels provides pupils, parents, staff and senior leaders with consistent, accurate and regular information that keeps them informed of developments in the academy
 - pupil numbers stabilise and appropriate senior staff are in post to gain the trust of pupils, parents and staff
 - governors manage statutory responsibilities and challenge leaders effectively by checking they have high-quality information in order to fully hold the academy to account
 - a robust monitoring and evaluation system for leaders and governors is in place
 - the statutory Department for Education requirements are kept up to date and available for parents on the academy website.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and pupil outcomes by:
 - increasing the expectations of all pupils to ensure they are consistently challenged to make the progress they are capable of
 - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching and rapidly putting in place support for those staff whose practice needs to improve
 - using assessment information provided to target teaching and ensure the needs of all groups, including vulnerable pupils, are fully met
 - putting a clear, effective marking and feedback policy in place which is followed consistently in all classes.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - developing a culture where pupils trust leaders to take appropriate actions to resolve their concerns
 - ensuring a higher priority is placed on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - working closely with parents to improve the attendance of pupils, especially that for disadvantaged pupils and those who are persistently absent

- increasing the expectations of pupil behaviour and supporting those pupils who require help to develop better self-management.

An external review of governance and the academy's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 28–29 June 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, other leaders and administrative staff. They also met with two trustees and a representative from the governing body. Inspectors also spoke informally with some parents and pupils during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors met with two representatives from the Education Community Academies Trust. The acting headteacher joined inspectors during some visits to lessons. Inspectors reviewed examples of pupils' writing and mathematics work with the acting headteacher. Inspectors also took account of the 51 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Context

The substantive headteacher, who has been absent due to ill health since the inspection in November 2015, resigned at the start of the spring term. In the absence of a headteacher, the governing body appointed the assistant headteacher as the acting headteacher. The second assistant headteacher took responsibility for mathematics in February 2016. The teacher with responsibility for the early years left last term. One of the Reception teachers is currently overseeing the work of staff in the Nursery and Reception classes. Some of the classes in Years 1, 2 and 5 have been taught by a number of temporary teachers since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 are currently being taught in small groups by two permanent teachers. Leaders from Knowle CofE Academy Primary and St Chads C.E. (VC) Primary School worked briefly with leaders at Chadsmead following the previous inspection.

Chadsmead Primary Academy is expected to join a multi-academy trust in September 2016. The Education Community Academies Trust is the proposed sponsor.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher has brought much-needed stability to the school. He is a reflective leader who has an honest and accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The acting headteacher has been successful in gaining the trust of pupils, parents and staff and ensuring that the systems for keeping pupils safe meet statutory requirements. The parents who spoke with inspectors were complimentary about the way in which the acting headteacher has worked with staff to make sure that parents and their children are heard. One parent commented, 'The headteacher goes out of his way to make parents welcome.' The overwhelming majority of staff who responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire are

positive about all aspects of the school, with some staff commenting that they are proud to work at Chadsmead.

In contrast to these positive developments within the school, trustees, governors and leaders have been unable to make the changes required to raise pupils' achievement, improve teaching and develop the expertise of some teachers with responsibilities. There are a number of reasons for this. Collectively, trustees, governors and leaders have not responded quickly enough to the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' learning. Also, the support available for senior leaders from St Chads Primary School was curtailed. Inspectors spoke with various school personnel about the reason for this, but there was no clear consensus as to why this support was stopped. As a result of this decision, senior leaders have not received the training required to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

The teachers with responsibilities for subjects or aspects of the school's work have written individual action plans in response to the issues raised at the last inspection. However, these plans do not identify the precise actions that leaders will take to eliminate the school's most significant weaknesses. Neither do they make clear who will check that their actions are making enough of a difference to pupils' outcomes or the quality of teaching, and how and when these checks will take place.

The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers remain weak. The acting headteacher checks the work of teachers more regularly and provides staff with some useful guidance to improve their practice. Other senior leaders are also providing support for individual teachers. However, this support is not having enough impact on improving teaching or raising pupils' achievement. This is because not all leaders have the skills and experience required to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility or provide teachers with the exact guidance needed to help pupils make faster progress. For instance, when checking teaching, reviewing pupils' work or meeting with staff, they do not focus enough on what teachers need to do to make a difference to the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as the most able or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The teacher with responsibility for overseeing the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils looked after ensures that these pupils receive appropriate additional support. While this extra support is beginning to make a difference to pupils' achievement, she fully acknowledges that further work is required to help teachers meet these pupils' learning needs more successfully in classrooms.

The teacher with responsibility for the early years has very quickly gained an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the Nursery and Reception classes. She has correctly identified that not enough boys and disadvantaged pupils are reaching a good level of development. In response to this, staff in the early years have started to make appropriate changes to the curriculum.

The acting headteacher, with effective support from the headteacher of Knowle Academy, has considerably improved the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. The single central record, which contains information about staff working at the school and details about staff training, is complete and up to date. An administrative error in relation to this record was resolved quickly by staff during the inspection. The school's safeguarding policy incorporates the latest statutory guidance. Staff and governors are aware of whom they need to speak to if they have concerns about pupils' safety. The acting headteacher takes prompt action in response to any concerns brought to his attention. He makes sure that he liaises with relevant external agencies so that pupils receive the support they need. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out of the school grounds and before all educational visits. The school's office administrator ensures that the local authority is informed of any pupils reported to be missing from education. The administrator also makes sure that pupils are not taken off roll until their location is verified. Through discussions with parents, staff ensure that they have a detailed understanding of pupils' medical needs. Records for the administration of medicine are comprehensive.

The school's website meets statutory requirements. It is up to date and provides parents with helpful information. In addition to the website, the acting headteacher keeps parents informed about the school's work through regular newsletters. A few parents who spoke with inspectors explained that they would like to know more about the school's long-term future; this includes information about the multi-academy trust. The acting headteacher intends to provide parents with more regular updates about the actions leaders are taking as the school prepares to join the trust. Leaders from Chadsmead have had the chance to visit schools within the trust. The acting headteacher is holding regular discussions with trust leaders in preparation for joining the Education Community Academies Trust.

Governance of the school remains ineffective. The trustees' statement of action was deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted prior to this inspection visit. Trustees were however asked to make sure that the statement made clear who would monitor the impact of the actions and who would evaluate the success of each part of the plan. Despite this recommendation, the plan has not been amended. Trustees and governors have missed some of the targets within their plan. For instance, a review of governance was planned to take place by March 2016. This review has not taken place. The support from Knowle and St Chads was due to continue until July 2016 but this support was stopped. A review of pupil premium funding is planned for next month. The trustees and the governing body do not hold leaders sufficiently to account. They focus on the completion of basic tasks instead of the effectiveness of leaders' actions on pupil's achievement and teaching. A few governors ask pertinent questions about pupils' achievement. However, governors do not make sure that leaders provide them with the information they have requested or that all leaders implement changes quickly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching remains inadequate. Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 are still not using the information they have to consistently plan activities that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, especially in mathematics. A few classes have been affected by continuing changes in class teachers and this has had a detrimental impact on pupils' learning.

Teachers' expectations of the most able pupils remain low. As a result, their activities are often too easy. The most able pupils are usually expected to complete the same work as their peers before moving on to work that is more suitably challenging. This restricts the progress they make. In comparison, the activities for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too difficult and pupils struggle to complete their work without substantial help from an adult.

There are some strengths in teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants use questions well to encourage pupils to discuss their learning and to extend their thinking. A few teachers keep a close check on pupils as they work and quickly move pupils who are ready on to other activities that will deepen pupils' skills and knowledge.

Last term, and in collaboration with staff, leaders revised the school's marking policy. Together they devised a system for marking pupils' work and providing pupils with feedback. A few weeks ago, leaders reviewed pupils' work and checked if staff were following the policy consistently. Their review showed that teachers, including some senior leaders, were not adhering to the school's agreed marking policy. During this inspection, inspectors found some books that had not been marked and examples of pupils not acting on the feedback from teachers.

Teaching in the early years has continued to improve. Teachers and teaching assistants in the early years have made suitable changes to the curriculum. For example, writing activities are more carefully planned so that they interest boys and girls. Staff are also getting better at making sure that the work they provide is more closely matched to children's different abilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The acting headteacher has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils are now kept safe and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted by all staff. Pupils of all ages told inspectors that they feel safe in the school and that they can talk to staff about any concerns they may have. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet.

Leaders and staff encourage pupils to express their views. A group of pupils in Year 6 were particularly complimentary about the acting headteacher and the way in which he interacts with pupils. They confirmed that staff listen and respond to their concerns. Pupils added that they appreciate the compliments they receive from staff and that the school is a happier place. Pupils talk about different cultures and religions with sensitivity and respect. They appreciate the importance of democracy and giving others the chance to express differing views.

Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Occasionally, a few pupils become distracted. This tends to happen when their work does not fully engage them. In the playground pupils play together well. They enjoy using and sharing the playground equipment.

Last academic year, pupils' attendance was similar to the national average for primary schools. Attendance is currently below average, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have introduced a suitable range of rewards and are working more closely with families in order to encourage regular attendance. The impact of this work has yet to be seen.

Outcomes for pupils

The school's latest information about pupils' achievement shows that standards remain below those expected. School leaders are aware of the achievement of individual pupils and keep a check on the progress made by pupils in each class. They are still in the process of analysing the achievement of different groups of pupils in the school. As a result, they do not know if gaps between different groups such as disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closing. Work in pupils' books and visits to lessons confirm that in key stages 1 and 2 achievement remains too variable. It is particularly weak in mathematics. In contrast, children's achievement in the early years is improving.

Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers in Years 1 to 6 do not make sure that pupils have the opportunity to deepen their mathematical understanding. Pupils do not have the chance to reason or solve complex problems. Some lower-ability pupils do not have a secure grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This results in pupils making basic errors in their work. The work that teachers plan does not build sufficiently on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Inspectors found examples of pupils repeatedly answering simplistic mathematical questions.

Pupils' achievement in writing is variable. Teachers are increasing the opportunities pupils have to write and they are also making sure that the writing activities are interesting for all pupils. In Year 2 for example, pupils were enjoying creating a job description for an adventurer. Boys and girls were equally engaged and motivated. One pupil proudly exclaimed, 'You need to be brave, fearless, a quick thinker and

have good navigation skills.' Pupils who are capable writers use grammar and punctuation correctly and spell accurately, while their classmates struggle with these aspects. Teachers do not consistently make sure that writing activities for lower-ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are at an appropriate level. They are often too difficult and this prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable.

Achievement in reading remains stronger than in writing and mathematics. Pupils are continuing to benefit from regular phonics sessions. They use their phonics (letters and sounds) knowledge well to read unfamiliar words and to read with increasing fluency. Nevertheless, pupils sometimes struggle to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words as they read.

External support

Following the inspection in November 2015, the acting headteacher and trustees arranged for leaders at Chadsmead to receive support from leaders at Knowle CofE Academy Primary and St Chads C.E. (VC) Primary School. This support has enabled leaders to ensure that Chadsmead Primary Academy meets the statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe. Unfortunately, the support from both schools was cut short, and therefore did not have sufficient impact on leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement.