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Samantha Cosgrove
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Dear Mrs Cosgrove

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nonsuch Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 1–2 March 2017, 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 June 2016.

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's action plan is 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 multi-academy board, the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2016.

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities and the most able pupils, make consistently good progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - use information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' ability
 - have high expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils produce in lessons
 - ask questions that make pupils think deeply and then insist on full and detailed answers
 - give pupils feedback that helps them to know how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - the very poor behaviour of a minority of pupils does not prevent other pupils from learning and feeling safe in school
 - teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and do not tolerate low-level disruption of lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that there is a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and the behaviour and achievement of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all senior leaders have clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that are understood by pupils, parents and staff
 - leaders regularly use assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind and then help them catch up
 - leaders routinely analyse information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of groups of pupils, in order to identify patterns and tackle weaknesses
 - training for teachers is targeted effectively at issues and individuals where it is most needed
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to rapidly improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - the sport premium grant is spent effectively to sustainably improve pupils' participation in sport
 - the curriculum is interesting and engaging so that it contributes positively to pupils' academic and personal development
 - extra-curricular activities and opportunities make a good contribution to

pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium and sport 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 1 March 2017 to 2 March 2017

Evidence

The inspector met with all members of the senior leadership team including the executive headteacher, head of school, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. She also met with associate leaders from the Barchelai multi-academy trust, with responsibility for behaviour, teaching and learning and special educational needs. Meetings were held with two members of the multi-academy trust and two members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with an educational consultant who is supporting the school. In addition, the inspector spoke with pupils and parents. The inspector visited all classes and looked at the work in pupils' books. Observations were carried out at breaktimes and lunchtimes and the inspector listened to pupils read during lessons. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and the school improvement plan were considered, together with documents relating to achievement, attendance, behaviour, teaching and safeguarding.

Context

Nonsuch Primary is one of three schools within the Barchelai multi-academy trust. The other two schools are St Michael's CofE Primary and Quinton Church Primary in Birmingham. Since the section 5 inspection in June 2016, there have been significant changes to leadership and management. A new leadership team was formed in September. The structure included a new head of school, deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers and a new special educational needs coordinator. Two of the assistant headteachers are members of the multi-academy trust and support the school on a part-time basis with behaviour and monitoring of teaching and learning. The special educational needs coordinator is also part-time and employed by the trust. Two new teaching staff have also joined the school since the previous inspection. Leaders made a conscious decision not to offer nursery provision this academic year, as they were unable to recruit suitably qualified staff. Provision currently operates from Reception Year to Year 6.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher has a good understanding of the school's current position. Her evaluations are honest and accurate. She has a clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards and improve teaching. She has created a new leadership team, and together, with the support of the academy trust, they are working collaboratively to introduce new policies and systems to bring about improvement. As one parent put it, 'Things have improved since the new headteacher arrived'. Staff also report that morale is improving and appreciate the support they receive from their colleagues in the academy trust. School governors

describe significant improvements in behaviour of pupils. This is validated in school records, which show a reduction in the number of exclusions and behaviour incidents. Leaders have set out a clear and appropriate action plan to address the findings of the previous inspection. Actions are reviewed and evaluated termly.

The improved direction of the school is because leaders and managers are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. The leadership structure has been expanded to tackle some of the most pressing and urgent aspects detected at the previous inspection. These include behaviour, teaching and learning and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are held fully to account for their actions through regular reviews of their performance. Leaders carry out checks on teaching and learning by visiting classrooms, talking to pupils and looking at workbooks to identify where further improvements are needed.

Assessment information is collected termly and a new system for tracking pupils' progress has been introduced. Standardised reading and mathematics tests are used to assess pupils' abilities in these subject areas and teacher assessments are used in writing. Pupil progress meetings are also held to determine how well pupils are doing and which pupils need extra help. Identification of these pupils is increasingly accurate and now leads to additional intervention and support. The special educational needs coordinator has successfully distinguished between pupils who have learning or specific difficulties compared to those who have underachieved due to previous weak teaching. As a result, the number of pupils on the special educational needs register is reducing and provision is more appropriately tailored to pupils' needs.

While attainment information is gathered for pupils across the school, more work is needed to summarise and evaluate the results, so that leaders and teachers have a precise understanding of which groups are achieving well and where gaps exist. Additionally, leaders have yet to establish school criteria to determine what constitutes expected or good progress. Currently, the school is unable to demonstrate this. However, there is good analysis of behaviour information. All incidents are logged and patterns and trends are identified. Records show that the number of disruptive incidents has fallen and fewer pupils are excluded for fixed-term periods. There have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection. Additionally, attendance information is monitored and analysed regularly. While attendance figures remain below national average, information provided shows that leaders are focusing on pupils who are persistently absent and numbers are slowly reducing.

Teachers have benefited from a wide range of training, particularly with regard to managing behaviour and understanding how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is leading to a calmer classroom environment and improved teaching and learning. Teachers have observed their colleagues at St Michaels and Quinton Church Primary and receive support from the trust with their planning. Assessments of pupils' work are also shared in order to

ensure accuracy. Effective support has been provided for staff in the early years and with teaching phonics. This has resulted in improved outcomes in these areas. The pupil premium review recommended at the previous inspection has not yet been carried out. While slow to organise, the review has been delayed by leaders, as they want the systems introduced to show positive impact before being assessed. Leaders plan to access this review in the summer term. Funding is used predominantly to subsidise the additional leadership and teaching support provided by the trust. A small amount is used to provide music tuition and subsidise trips for eligible pupils and purchase resources. As leaders have not yet begun to measure pupil progress, it is not possible to determine the impact this funding is having on pupils' academic achievement.

The sports premium review recommended at the previous inspection has not been carried out. Funding received is used to employ a sports coach to lead physical education (PE) lessons and run lunchtime and after-school clubs. A range of clubs are offered to pupils from Years 1 to 6. However, the range of clubs available is quite narrow and leaders do not assess the impact of this funding on pupils' physical development and well-being.

Curriculum planning remains at a very early stage. Teachers highlight skills covered on curriculum plans. Topics are set for each year group and incorporated into literacy activities. However, there is very little evidence in pupils' books or through displays around school of some subjects being taught, especially geography, computing, art and music. The wider range of genres in English is also limited, with pupils reporting they rarely do drama or learn poetry. Science and religious education books show that these subjects are not taught regularly or show enough progress in developing pupils' knowledge and skills.

Extra-curricular opportunities are increasing such as theme days, visits and sports clubs. Other events such as the Year 6 dance festival, Cinderella ball in early years and participation in World Book Day have helped to improve pupils' engagement in learning and enrich the curriculum. While not yet in abundance, these add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

The school's website has been renewed and contains some useful information for parents. However, it does not meet the Department for Education's criteria for what academies should publish online. Specifically, the pupil premium and sports premium statements are not compliant; details about the content of the curriculum in each academic year for every subject are not given; the annual report and accounts for academies is not published; and information about the governance structure and governors' business and financial interests is missing.

There are currently six members of the local governing body, three of which are staff. A parent governor has, however, recently been appointed. The small number of governors involved meet regularly and carry out informal monitoring by visiting the school regularly to hear readers, talk to pupils and help in classrooms. A pupil

progress committee has been formed and governors have discussed historic published performance information. Governors have a good understanding of the issues faced by the school and readily accept that significant improvement is needed. While they are able to pinpoint where progress is being made in terms of behaviour, governors do not have an up-to-date overview of current achievement for pupils, as progress data is not available.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, while improving, is inconsistent across the school and pupils are not yet making the progress they are capable of in reading, writing or mathematics. Older pupils report that they find reading difficult and that they do not read regularly. Writing skills are still underdeveloped and pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply the skills they learn in their daily work, for example, using spelling strategies, or cover a wide enough range of writing for different purposes. There is limited use of reasoning in mathematics and pupils' use of problem-solving is in the early stages. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are still weak and too few activities promote these aspects.

Teachers now plan work at three different levels, known as the 'three stars.' A three-star task is more difficult than a one- or two-star task. Pupils are encouraged to select the level most suited to their ability. This is also to promote greater independence by pupils. However, teachers do not check regularly enough or provide sufficient guidance to ensure pupils select the right level of challenge, particularly the most able. Many pupils opt for work which is too easy, and this impedes their progress. Additionally, some of the three-star tasks lack sufficient challenge and fail to promote reasoning and thinking skills.

The quality and quantity of pupils' work remains too variable and teachers' expectations are not high enough. In some lessons, pupils complete very little work due to the time taken by teachers to introduce tasks. While all books are well presented, the quality of handwriting is not routinely neat enough and pupils continue to scribble out mistakes made. Pupils also seldom use rulers in mathematics, even when tasks direct this; for example, 'use a ruler to show lines of symmetry'. Teachers ask pupils questions and on occasion ask for answers using full sentences. However, teachers rarely probe pupils' answers further or ask more demanding questions to challenge their thinking.

Leaders have introduced a new feedback and marking policy. Teachers are required to highlight positive aspects of the work in green and areas which need addressing in pink. All teachers apply this aspect of the marking policy. However, teachers are less consistent in adhering to other aspects of the policy, for example setting 'next steps' or ensuring that pupils respond to 'gap tasks'. Work in other subjects is not marked as regularly as writing and mathematics and on occasion is not accurate. For example, spelling and mathematics books show work is ticked by pupils or teachers when it is incorrect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is improving. Most pupils get on with their work without fuss and follow instructions. Behaviour of children in the early years is good. However, in other year groups there is still too much low-level persistent chatter during lessons, with pupils talking over each other and not listening when the teacher is talking. Pupils find it hard to wait for their turn to contribute to a discussion and tend to interrupt. At playtimes, key stage 1 pupils play sensibly because they have toys to play with. This helps entertain them and develop their social skills. However, there is little equipment on the key stage 2 playground, other than a few footballs. Consequently, pupils sometimes do not have anything to do, and on occasion, disagreements break out between pupils in relation to the ball.

Behaviour management is now a collective responsibility of all staff. Leaders, governors and trust members have prioritised this aspect as they acknowledge that pupils cannot learn if poor behaviour disrupts lessons. Staff manage disruptive pupils well and quickly calm pupils down who are aggressive. A new policy and positive attitudes to learning have been introduced. Being 'ready, responsible and showing respect' (the 3Rs) are strongly promoted and displayed prominently around the school. Fewer pupils now leave classrooms without permission and records show that fixed-term exclusions are decreasing. However, pupils report that they still do not feel safe in school as there are too many fights at playtimes and too many pupils swear or throw things.

Leaders have appointed an attendance officer to track and monitor pupil absences. Attendance certificates are awarded in assemblies to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Efficient systems are in place and effective action is taken to follow up pupils who are persistently absent. Letters are sent to parents and fines imposed. However, attendance figures remain below the national average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils are on part-time timetables due to their complex needs. While this impacts on attendance figures, the proportion not attending school regularly is too high. At the time of the inspection visit, 28 pupils were deemed to be persistently absent, almost all of whom are vulnerable due to being disadvantaged pupils or having special educational needs and/or disabilities. This absence has a negative effect on the development and achievement of these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2 were below average in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils who left Year 6 made the progress expected, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, outcomes at the end of early

years are rising and in 2016 were closer to the national average. A higher proportion of children reached a good level of development compared to previous years. Additionally, the proportion of pupils achieving the level required in the reading check in Year 1 was close to the national average. The majority of children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 for phonics are on track to match national averages in these areas in 2017. This is due to the support received from leaders and staff within the trust.

The school's current assessment information shows that standards in almost all year groups are below age-related in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that progress is uneven; some pupils are making good gains but too many have not made the progress they are capable of due to weaknesses which remain in teaching.

External support

Primarily, external support is provided through the trust and through the Oaks Collegiate school group. This support is proving to be effective. The extended leadership team bring with them expertise and skill. Collectively they are working with teachers to improve teaching, manage behaviour and accelerate progress. External consultants are also commissioned to lead staff training. The impact of this has yet to be measured. The trust board keep a careful track of the school's progress. They meet half termly to discuss the progress the school is making and review minutes of governing body meetings in order to hold leaders fully to account. There is demonstrable impact in the support offered by the trust in the early years and for phonic teaching as seen by the improving outcomes.