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4 April 2017

Mr Matthew Mander  
Headteacher  
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Bringsty  
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Dear Mr Mander

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Brockhampton Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 22 and 23 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2016. 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.

The school's action plans are 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 academy board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2016.**

- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
  - subject leaders are equipped with the skills needed to evaluate the progress made by pupils, including in the early years, and provide relevant support to improve teaching
  - checks on teaching give sufficient attention to the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs
  - action plans are evaluated against measurable criteria so that leaders and governors can determine the success of actions taken
  - staff are held fully to account for raising outcomes
  - attendance information is used more effectively to challenge lateness and persistent absence
  - governors fulfil their duties effectively and establish effective communication with parents
  - the academy's website meets the statutory requirements and provides parents with the relevant information.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that all teachers:
  - accurately assess pupils' abilities and set suitably challenging tasks, especially for the most able
  - plan work which builds on from previous learning and moves pupils on in lessons when they show that they understand the work set
  - use accurate written language at all times, address common spelling errors made by pupils and correct calculations accurately
  - make effective use of additional adults to support learners
  - insist on and only accept the highest standards of presentation in pupils' work.
- Raise pupils' achievement in all subjects, especially in writing and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - additional funding is fully accounted for, well managed and spent wisely to improve outcomes and provision for sports and for disadvantaged pupils
  - those who have special educational needs are supported effectively
  - pupils have more opportunities to explain their thinking in mathematics and to solve problems

- pupils are taught spelling strategies to improve their writing.

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 academy'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 second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 March 2017**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, pupils, members of the interim academy board (IAB) and an educational consultant. The inspector looked at pupils' books, various documents and the school's website. The single central record of checks on staff was also examined.

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring inspection in November 2016, one new teaching assistant and a part-time learning support assistant have been appointed. One existing teacher has taken on responsibility for whole-school assessment. A teacher from Lickhill Primary Academy continues to be seconded to Brockhampton Academy to act as assistant headteacher.

An IAB continues to be responsible for the governance of the school. The long-term intention is for Brockhampton Academy to join a multi-academy trust.

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

As noted in the first monitoring inspection, the headteacher leads the school with calm authority. He exercises wise judgement and guides, supports and when necessary appropriately challenges staff, in order to improve teaching and learning. He has strengthened lines of accountability and ensures that staff get regular feedback and training to improve their performance. Staff appreciate and value this. Teachers and support staff report that morale has lifted and there is an ever-increasing sense of team spirit. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Subject leadership is improving. Staff with leadership responsibilities have received suitable training from an educational consultant and have visited other schools to work with colleagues and observe effective practice. Subject leaders have started to carry out appropriate checks on teaching and learning and, in some instances, have given feedback to staff. Increasingly, they are exercising initiative and making decisions rather than just responding to instructions from the headteacher. The early years leader has managed to strengthen the working relationship between the on-site privately run pre-school provision and the school's Reception class. This is helping to improve transition arrangements and the early years curriculum. She has shown herself to be capable and receptive to advice and is growing in confidence in her role.

Last year, the assistant headteacher oversaw the implementation of new approaches to the teaching of phonics and reading. The improved methods are working very well. They are helping to raise standards and accelerate pupils' reading progress. Leaders are now considering the best way to build further on these positive literacy developments. To this end, staff are readily engaging in informed debate about the pros and cons of different approaches to the teaching of reading. They are able to call upon a range of evidence about pupils' progress to support their evaluations about what is working well and what must be improved. This is indicative of the increasingly evaluative culture being adopted in school. Staff feel that they have a voice in shaping policy and want to work together to find ways to improve teaching and boost pupils' progress. Similarly, the school has just started a new approach to teach writing more effectively. It is very early days but all staff are working as a team to ensure that a consistent approach is used to improve pupils' writing skills in all year groups. Effective teamwork and reflective practice are indicators that staff have confidence that senior leaders are developing effective teaching and learning approaches. Consequently, teachers are more confident, self-motivated and optimistic, and want to give of their best.

In January 2017, the Year 5 teacher took responsibility for whole-school assessment. Previously, this job was done by the headteacher. This change was made as part of the school's plan to strengthen middle leadership and to share out work in a more sensible way. The leadership change is proving to be a wise decision. The new leader is building further on the work initiated by the headteacher and has made a promising start. As was the case at the first monitoring inspection, leaders and staff do have an informed overview of the standards achieved across the school and know how well key groups, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are doing. This said, there is more to do to iron out variations in teachers' use of assessment in different classes. In order to do this, the assessment leader is working with staff to make sure that teachers' judgements about what pupils know and can do are consistently reliable in all classes.

Subject leadership of mathematics, computing, science and art is becoming more firmly established. Postholders are currently being trained and given time and opportunity to develop their leadership skills. They have produced clear action plans with measurable success criteria, which they are following through with tenacity. They have offered advice to colleagues and have identified the key skills that must be taught as pupils move through the school.

The deputy headteacher role is also being developed in order to strengthen senior leadership. This senior leader is now more involved in analysing aspects of the school's performance and planning actions to improve provision and outcomes. For example, the deputy headteacher now analyses attendance information in great detail in order to spot patterns and challenge unnecessary lateness or absence. He has made sure pupils and parents get consistent messages about the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school. All of this is making a difference. There

have been fewer instances of lateness during this spring term so far than in the autumn term 2016. Attendance overall has risen this academic year. Even so, a few pupils continue to be late and miss the start of lessons.

Regular meetings between teachers and leaders, as well as the headteacher's frequent drop-ins to classrooms, ensure that all staff are following agreed school policy and get feedback about their work.

The school's website, which was still slightly out of date at the time of the first monitoring inspection, now contains all of the required information that should be published.

The IAB is steering the school in the right direction with well-informed care. Board members are ambitious for the school to come out of special measures and to be a good school. They are also aware that, while teaching is much improved and leadership at all levels is getting better, there is still more to be done to build leadership skills in staff other than the headteacher. As already reported, this is an area which is developing steadily. The leadership potential within the staff is being nurtured and given the opportunity to grow.

Financial management, too, is much improved. Effective use of the accountancy skills on the IAB are, in no small part, responsible for the better management of the school's budget. Additional funds to improve provision for disadvantaged pupils and school sport are managed well. Board members receive regular updates about the use of funds and the impact on pupils' achievement.

Looking ahead, the IAB is still exploring options for the school to join a multi-academy trust. This is taking some time. This is because the IAB wants to make sure it is fully informed about the impact of this change on the school and also because there are few local options available. In the meantime, the IAB remains committed to the school, making sure it is moving in the right direction and that leaders are addressing the weaknesses identified at the section 5 inspection. They are also ensuring that parents are suitably informed about the school's work and improvements.

The need to develop and strengthen leadership roles within the school, variations in the use of assessment and the need to clarify the long-term governance arrangements remain key reasons why the school is not yet ready to come out of special measures.

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

Teaching has improved considerably. In all classes, pupils have to work hard and, in the main, time is used well. Teaching assistants are in tune with the teaching and learning culture of the school, and support the teachers that they work with. Each day starts with brief 'early birds' activities when pupils practise key skills in short

sharp bursts. Pupils settle quickly on arrival and set to work in a calm purposeful manner. These starter activities help to consolidate and extend pupils' basic skills and set the tone for the day ahead.

Continuing improvements in assessment mean that work now builds on previous learning more effectively than was previously the case. Even so, while inconsistencies in the way teachers use assessment information have reduced, some variability remains. The accuracy of assessment in Years 2 and 3, for instance, has yet to be matched elsewhere.

At their most effective, teaching staff are able to adjust tasks and teaching during lessons to make sure that those who understand quickly are moved on swiftly and those who need extra help get it there and then. In mathematics in Years 2 and 3, for example, teachers ask lots of well-chosen questions and listen carefully to pupils' responses. Consequently, they are able to refine tasks so that the level of challenge is just right for pupils' differing levels of understanding. In the Reception class, staff organise meaningful tasks that build on children's prior learning and develop their conceptual understanding. Resources are often used effectively and adults lead and support children with kind, yet firm, direction. At times, however, this level of attention is not so apparent. In Year 1, for instance, a well-put-together lesson about the properties of 3D shapes did not develop as well as it might because some pupils who completed quite a challenging task quickly were left to mark time rather than extend their learning further. In Year 4, a largely successful lesson about addition went slightly off track when teaching rushed through an important explanation that left some pupils feeling unsure. To be fair, the teacher had correctly identified a common misconception and was right to seize upon it as a key teaching point. However, the brevity of explanation did not allow all pupils to keep up.

While the pitch of challenge may vary in mathematics, this is not the case in English. In fact, the expectation and standard, especially for the brightest pupils' writing, presents a very positive picture. In some instances, pupils' writing is exceptional. It is clear that pupils who have the ability to exceed age-related expectations are given the teaching and opportunity to do so.

Furthermore, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation has improved. Most pupils now write in a legible cursive style and, in the early years, teaching has focused heavily on improving pupils' pencil grip and letter formation. Here and there, some pupils elect to use biro instead of pencil or pen, which goes against agreed school policy.

Teachers model the correct use of language and are attentive to errors made by pupils. The use of 'fix it' times, usually at the start of the morning or afternoon sessions, allow teachers and pupils to follow up any mistakes or misconceptions or, where appropriate, challenge pupils to think more deeply and extend earlier learning.



While focusing on developing pupils' basic skills, staff are still alert to the importance of a broad curriculum enriched by memorable events. Learning outdoors in the forest school area is a regular feature of school life and leaders have plans to develop the area further. Recently, pupils and staff marked world maths day by releasing balloons containing mathematical challenges. Some of the cards attached to the balloons have been found and returned by people in different parts of the country. Pupils have enjoyed finding out how far the balloons have travelled and this fun activity required them to apply and practise skills in several different subjects.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

As teaching improves, progress continues to accelerate and attainment is on the up. The above-average results in reading and mathematics in 2016, and work being completed by current pupils, indicate that standards are rising. In mathematics, pupils have more opportunities to articulate their thinking and to develop their reasoning. Teachers regularly build discussion into lessons to enable pupils to think and reflect on their mathematical learning. Work in books, records from leaders' checks on teaching and observations made during this inspection, indicate that there is an increased expectation that pupils will talk about their work and explain how they have found solutions.

In 2016, progress in writing for the most able pupils was disappointing. In response, leaders and teachers have examined what more can be done to make sure the very brightest pupils reach high standards. Current work shows that their efforts are meeting with increasing success. Pupils' writing, especially in Years 5 and 6, is impressive and a fair proportion of pupils are working above the standard expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities are regularly required to practise spelling and the school's renewed focus on reading is bringing benefits too. In addition, homework plays its part. Pupils and parents report that homework is a weekly expectation and supports classroom learning.

The improving assessment systems allow the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to be checked with more care. Furthermore, liaison with other organisations that provide support and advice now happens in a more systematic way. Extra support sessions are run well and record-keeping is more organised. Nevertheless, leaders' checks on the impact of the extra support is insufficiently rigorous. Again, attention to the way assessment information is used will help to improve this.

### **External support**

External support continues to be effective. The school's links with Coppice Primary School and Lickhill Academy remain. In addition, the headteacher has called upon colleagues in other schools in order to share and learn from effective practice, as

needs be. An independent educational consultant continues to support the school with suitable training and advice.