

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Samantha Cosgrove
Executive headteacher
Nonsuch Primary School
Wood Leasow
Woodgate Valley
Birmingham
West Midlands
B32 3SE

Dear Mrs Cosgrove

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nonsuch Primary School

Following my visit with Anna Smith, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13–14 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 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 of 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.

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 trust, 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 second monitoring inspection on 13 to 14 June 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with all members of the senior leadership team, including the executive headteacher, head of school, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. They also met with associate leaders from the Barchelai multi-academy trust, who are employed part-time, with responsibility for early years, behaviour, teaching and learning and special educational needs. A meeting was held with the chair of the multi-academy trust (MAT) and two members of the governing body. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils and parents. The inspectors visited all classes and looked at the work in pupils' books. Observations were carried out at breaktimes and lunchtimes and inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read. Documents relating to achievement, attendance, behaviour, curriculum and safeguarding were considered.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, there have been no changes to teaching staff. There is now one parent representative on the governing body, but one vacancy still exists. Although overall pupil numbers have fallen, 11 new pupils have joined the school, several with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some of these pupils have complex learning needs and behaviour issues. No additional funding or resources have been provided by the local authority to support these pupils so leaders are drawing on their own, already tight, budget.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The improvements noted at the last visit have not been sustained or built on. Some inadequate teaching remains in the school, pupils' progress is inconsistent and the management of disruptive and unacceptable behaviour is not effective. The school's own assessment information indicates that outcomes in 2017 at the end of each key stage are likely to be lower than the school's results in 2016 and below the national average. Attendance is also declining and is below the national average and lower than 2016. Pupils do not benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum as long- and medium-term plans are still in the development stage.

The executive headteacher and governors accept and acknowledge that the momentum of improvement has slowed. They have an honest and realistic view of where weaknesses remain. Leaders have invested heavily in expanding the leadership team in order to accelerate progress and distribute areas of responsibility. However, despite funding four permanent senior leaders and four part-time associate leaders from within the MAT, there is limited evidence of impact within some areas delegated. This is because policies introduced are not followed consistently and lines of responsibility are not clear. For example, while behaviour

management is a collective staff responsibility, three different leaders have an input into monitoring pupils' behaviour. Managing and dealing with behaviour incidents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is led by a different staff member to the staff member who manages incidents of poor behaviour by other pupils. This leads to confusion when incidents occur as to who records them and who oversees any follow-up action.

There is good evidence to show that the support provided in the early years and the coordination of special educational needs has been successful. As a result, these children and pupils are making accelerated progress. Effective support has also been provided for some individual staff in order to improve their knowledge and skills. This has led to improved use of behaviour management strategies in some classes and the creation of a calm and purposeful working environment. However, this is not the norm across the school and some inadequate teaching and weak management of behaviour remains.

There has been ongoing improvement in the use of the school's own assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind. This is linked to regular pupil progress meetings where all pupils are discussed and those in need of additional support are targeted for extra help. This additional help is monitored carefully by the special educational needs coordinator. The executive headteacher has also worked hard to devise a more accurate and purposeful school assessment system. Termly data is collected which is more reliable and accurate. Teachers' assessments are checked with other schools in the MAT and analysed fully. The attainment and progress of different cohorts, groups and subjects is now provided in summary format for staff, leaders and governors. This is helping to pinpoint precisely where strengths and weaknesses lie in pupils' achievement. While attainment information is, overall, reliable, further work is needed to secure the accuracy of pupils' progress. This is because starting points of pupils entered originally onto the school's tracking system were too high, as leaders matched pupils' abilities against age-related levels as opposed to their actual levels.

Regular analysis of assessment, behaviour and attendance information is carried out for different groups by different leaders. School evidence shows that progress for key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is not good. This is because teaching is not yet good. While behaviour records are analysed regularly and records show that there is a reduction in the number of behaviour incidents, there are still too many recorded incidents of disruptive, aggressive and defiant behaviour across the school. Attendance patterns and trends are also closely monitored and tracked. Although follow-up actions are taken, there is very little change in the number of persistently absent pupils at the time of this visit compared to the March visit. These continue to be some of the school's most vulnerable pupils and overall absence for these groups is below average and not improving.

Leaders have continued to invest in staff training. This includes training for teachers in dealing with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example dyslexia training, and in physically handling pupils who are aggressive. This has improved staff awareness and skills. Leadership training has also been provided for senior leaders to enable them to carry out their roles successfully. This has had limited impact to date. External support commissioned by the school this term is focused on improving the quality of teaching. This is because leaders, rightly, recognise that weak teaching is impacting heavily on current pupils' achievement and behaviour.

The pupil premium review recommended at the previous inspection has recently been initiated, but is not yet complete. Leaders have been provided with a proforma which they are currently populating with school information. They have identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and have collected assessment information about the achievement of pupils compared to other pupils in the school. The evaluation and impact of provision has, however, not yet been carried out, so leaders are unable to determine whether the grant received is being well spent or not.

Leaders have struggled to find a suitable external consultant to carry out a review of the sport premium grant. As a result, they are carrying out their own evaluation of provision in this area. They collect information about participation rates and the range of sports activities provided. As a result of their evaluations, adjustments to the use of funding will be made next year. Leaders are confident that they will be able to assess the impact of this grant at the end of this academic year.

Curriculum planning remains in the early stages of development. A whole-school plan, showing the full range of primary subjects, is not yet in place. Medium-term plans for all year groups and all subjects are also incomplete. This means that pupils do not receive a broad and balanced curriculum and do not cover the range of subjects and skills specified in the national curriculum. For example, very little written evidence exists in relation to religious education, computing, geography and history across the school in pupils' books. There is also some overlap of topics taught, with pupils in different year groups covering the same themes. The school's current approach is to incorporate cross-curricular links into pupils' writing. However, evidence in books is limited and some tasks lack challenge as they only require pupils to label diagrams or complete short exercises. On a more positive note, there is an increasing number of good-quality displays around the school and in classrooms. These demonstrate some evidence of the wider curriculum being taught; for example, a science display on the functions of the heart and several displays focused on healthy living. As a result, pupils are developing a good level of knowledge and understanding of personal well-being and leaders' investment in improving the learning environment has been successful.

Extra-curricular sports clubs, such as multi-sports, football and netball are offered by sports coaches at lunchtimes and after school. The music service also provides

peripatetic guitar lessons for pupils in Year 4. Leaders monitor attendance at these clubs and subsidise the cost through the pupil premium, as many of the pupils who attend are disadvantaged. These clubs add to pupils' enjoyment of school and help develop their physical and musical talents.

Governors have a clear and realistic view of how well the school is improving. They have a good understanding of published assessment information and the school's current data. Representatives say they are 'disappointed' with the lack of progress since the previous monitoring visit. They have already identified the need to hold teachers more fully to account through linking pupil progress information with teacher performance management systems. Governors visit the school to meet with leaders, hear readers and gather first-hand information. They say that behaviour has been improving until recently, but accept the need to check records to ensure that processes are robust and consistent rather than relying on verbal reports. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the school's website is compliant. This has been reviewed and now meets the requirements of the Department for Education's criteria on information that must be published for parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching is inconsistent and some inadequate teaching remains. This has a negative effect on pupils' progress. Expectations remain too low – especially in Year 6. Too many pupils scribble out their mistakes and do not take pride in their work. There are some positive signs that the quantity of work pupils produce is beginning to increase. However, the quality of work, particularly writing, remains weak. This is because most pupils do not have secure grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Handwriting is also poorly formed for many pupils and too few teachers remind pupils about the need for neat work and accurate sentence construction.

Lesson planning has been designed to ensure that teachers pitch work at the appropriate level for pupils of different abilities. Some teachers are more successful at this than others. Where it works well, clear success criteria are provided and pupils are guided to work at the correct level. Additionally, tasks set build successfully on pupils' prior learning. However, in some year groups, pupils do not understand the work set and teachers do not model well enough what pupils need to do. This leads to confusion and pupils do not make sufficient progress.

The level and depth of teachers' questioning remains variable. It is used well in the early years as adults regularly ask children about their learning. This helps promote children's speaking and listening skills and enables adults to assess children's understanding. Some good practice also exists in some year groups in mathematics where teachers use open-ended questions and ask pupils to explain their methods and reasoning; for example, 'how did you work that out?'

Leaders have introduced a whole-school feedback and marking policy. This requires teachers to use green marker pens to highlight positive aspects of a pupil's work and demonstrate where there is evidence that pupils have achieved the objective set. However, pointers for improvement are supposed to be highlighted in pink marker pen. Books checked during the inspection with leaders show an over-use of green pen with very limited use of pink pen to pinpoint areas for improvement. Little guidance is therefore provided to show pupils how to improve their work. Where 'gap tasks' are set by teachers to check pupils' levels of understanding, pupils rarely complete them. The feedback policy devised is therefore not being successfully implemented consistently across the school. Unfortunately, some comments made by teachers in pupils' books also indicate that some pupils refuse to do the work set, or leave the classroom without permission during the lesson. This reinforces that pupils do not have positive attitudes towards learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders, staff and governors are unanimous that behaviour since the previous visit has been improving until recently. The arrival of several new children has, however, caused disruption in some year groups and unsettled some pupils. Behaviour records checked show that there are still too many incidents of pupils being aggressive and defiant. There has been one permanent exclusion since the previous visit and seven fixed-term exclusions. While this relates only to a small number of very challenging pupils, challenging behaviour has a negative impact on classroom learning and pupils' sense of feeling safe at school.

Behaviour systems used within the school are not applied consistently. Some teachers make good use of the zone charts in classrooms to demonstrate where good or unacceptable behaviour is displayed. However, some teachers are more tolerant of unacceptable behaviour and mixed messages are given about pupils' conduct, for example saying pupils have 'had a good morning' when the pupil has refused to carry out the tasks set. Allowances are made which allow pupils to do different work to the rest of the class, for example drawing rather than writing, in order to maintain the calm working environment. This approach allows disruptive pupils to manipulate their own learning.

While all staff know that they are all responsible for managing pupils' behaviour, lines of management are not clear. Different leaders coordinate different groups of pupils, which can lead to gaps occurring in recording of incidents as staff assume that others have recorded them. Sanctions levied are not systematically recorded. During the visit, low-level disruption was evident in most classes. Sanctions are not applied with enough immediacy where behaviour is unacceptable. For example, some pupils who are placed on the red zone are allowed to have their playtimes and often move back up to the green zone without any punishment whatsoever. Conversely, pupils who demonstrate exemplary behaviour and move into the gold zone, or highest level, receive no rewards or recognition of their efforts. Leaders are keen to revisit the behaviour policy and are adamant that staff need to apply

procedures consistently in order to improve overall behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Attendance is below the national average and lower than in 2016. The numbers of persistently absent pupils have not reduced significantly since the last visit. Many of these pupils are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities so are, by nature, vulnerable. Their absence impacts on their levels of progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Standards at the current time are below average in most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes at the end of the early years, in the Year 1 phonic check and at the end of Year 2 are projected to be below the national average in 2017, based on teacher assessments. Standards are rising in Years 3, 4 and 5 but Year 6 results are likely to be well below national averages in writing and mathematics and lower than the school's results in 2016. No pupils are currently working at greater depth as most pupils are significantly behind in their learning.

The school's current assessment information does not yet provide an accurate profile of progress across the school due to entry-level assessments not being secure and reliable. However, work in pupils' books shows that progress in English and mathematics is not as rapid as it needs to be to close gaps in pupils' learning, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Progress is, however, evident in the early years, where children make good gains from their starting points. They are well supported in early writing and mathematics and, as a result, master the basic skills needed.

External support

External support continues to be provided by the MAT. Teachers work in collaboration with their partner schools. They plan with their respective year group partners and have observed teaching. Leaders commission support from external consultants and from the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP). Some of this support has been effective, especially in relation to mathematics and the focused input into mastery in mathematics. Reasoning and problem-solving skills are becoming more evident in pupils' work. Regular moderation is also carried out with partner schools and with external consultants to check the validity and accuracy of teacher assessments. This is helping to ensure that pupils are assessed correctly.