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Mr J Hawkins  
Headteacher  
Manor School  
Lydalls Close  
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Oxfordshire  
OX11 7LB

Dear Mr Hawkins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Manor School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that improvement plans:
  - focus sharply on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils, including the most able
  - measure the success of the actions against the impact that the strategies have on raising standards.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to:
  - rapidly increase the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

- increase the proportion of pupils reaching high standards and achieving a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reduce the incidents of poor behaviour across the school, particularly those that have a negative impact on pupils' learning in lessons.
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that governors focus sharply, first and foremost, on checking the achievement of all groups of pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your two deputy headteachers, the assistant headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and two representatives from Oxfordshire Primary Education Network Trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documents were scrutinised, including performance management information, governing body minutes, and the trust and local authority visit notes. I also had a meeting with a group of pupils.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection there has been a great deal of turbulence in staffing and governance. A new deputy headteacher and an early years leader were appointed and took up their posts in September 2016. The senior leadership structure of the school was reviewed and an assistant headteacher was appointed from within the school. Four phase-leader roles were created to take responsibility for early years, key stage 1, lower key stage 2 and upper key stage 2. A second designated safeguarding lead was also trained to the required level. In December 2016, the upper key stage 2 leader, who was also the pupil premium leader, left the school. A new upper key stage 2 leader was appointed and took up post in January 2017. A new chair of the governing body was elected in May 2017.

The class structure has been reviewed. There are three classes in Reception and Years 1, 5 and 6, two classes in Years 2, 3 and 4 and one mixed Year 3/4 class. In September 2016, the headteacher reduced his working time to four days per week and is retiring at the end of the summer term. The part-time deputy headteacher has assumed the day-to-day leadership of the school. One of the deputy headteachers is leaving the school at the end of the summer term. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up post in September 2017.

## **Main findings**

The school has been through a period of instability since the previous inspection. The results at the end of 2016 were disappointing across the school. Since that time, new systems and procedures have been put in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The curriculum has been mapped to ensure that pupils' knowledge builds on their previous learning in all subjects and key stages. In English, pupils' learning is captured through learning journeys, which demonstrate the progress they make across a range of genres. Teachers check pupils' knowledge at the start of a unit of work and identify targets for pupils to focus on, to help them to concentrate on developing the skills required to be successful. In mathematics, the subject leader has put in place a problem-solving approach to the teaching of mathematics. Pupils use a wide range of resources to support their learning and teachers check their understanding through questioning and discussion. Pupils initially complete tasks linked to key objectives to check their knowledge. Teachers then identify gaps in their understanding and target their teaching to individuals and groups to enable them to successfully achieve the intended learning. These strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' progress across the school.

Significant improvements have been achieved in the early years. The new early years leader has established a shared understanding across the staff team, which focuses on the needs of each individual child. The early years environment has been restructured and reinvigorated. Children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills across all areas of learning, both inside and outdoors. Teachers involve all staff in planning suitable activities to enable children to develop their curiosity and independence. Learning is now more purposeful because teachers plan children's next steps. They check children's understanding by interacting with them in their own initiated activities and through focused learning tasks led by adults. The early years adviser from the local authority has provided effective support. Assessments of children's achievements by the early years team have been moderated by the local authority and deemed to be accurate. Outcomes at the end of this academic year have improved and are the highest for four years. The proportion of pupils who are well prepared for learning in Year 1 is above the national average for 2016.

The capacity of school leaders to bring about improvements has increased following the restructuring of the senior leadership team and the appointment of new staff. Senior leaders have more opportunities to identify areas to focus on to bring about improvement. Monitoring arrangements are much more robust. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they are checking the quality of learning and progress of pupils much more rigorously. They know there is more to be done to make sure teaching is at least good in all classes, in order to improve outcomes for pupils. They have put in place a new system for managing the performance of all staff. The observation of teaching, pupils' outcome data and the quality of pupils' work in books contribute to the judgements leaders make about the performance of teachers. This has led to

improvements in teaching. Where teaching continues to require improvement, senior leaders identify suitable targets to support teachers to improve their teaching. They work alongside them to improve their skills and competence. Coaching and guidance are provided for individual teachers, through a planned programme of modelling effective teaching strategies and assistance in planning and classroom management. Outcomes across the school are improving. The school's own records show that outcomes overall in all year groups have improved this academic year. However, the school's own information on pupils' achievements also shows that not all groups of pupils achieve as well as they could, particularly the most able. Currently, too few pupils reach high standards and develop a greater depth of understanding.

Directors from the trust carried out a review of the school in the autumn term 2016. At the review, they identified further concerns than were evident at the previous inspection relating to pupils' behaviour. Such were the concerns that a notice to improve was issued to the school. The trust formulated a statement of action to support rapid improvements in the key areas of leadership, behaviour, teaching, learning and assessment. The behaviour-support team from the local authority has provided effective support to improve pupils' behaviour. Pupils know that their behaviour and the behaviour of other pupils can sometimes disrupt their learning. The school has implemented a new behaviour system which is understood well by pupils. They know that the blue zone is where they want to be and the green zone is a great place to be. Pupils whose behaviour falls below the school's expectations are in the amber or red zones. Senior leaders support improvements in pupils' behaviour by helping them to refocus their attention to learning. Although pupils' attitudes to learning have improved overall, there is a significant minority of pupils whose behaviour interrupts the learning of others. In addition to this, the attendance of some groups of pupils is not good enough. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than that of other pupils in the school. This is having a detrimental effect on their learning and progress. School leaders monitor pupils' attendance, but more needs to be done to improve the attendance of these two key groups of pupils.

Governors were swift to instigate the review of the governing body following the previous inspection. This identified weaknesses in their systems and procedures. Governors have attended a range of training to increase their knowledge and understanding and help them to check on the school's work more effectively. Additional governors from the trust have been co-opted to the governing body to increase its capacity to challenge and support school leaders. There has been a renewed focus in the governing body in recent weeks. A new chair of the governing body was elected in May 2017. School leaders are challenged more effectively. Governors are fully aware that, currently, pupils' achievement is not good enough. Yet, there is insufficient attention paid to this key feature of the school's work at governors' meetings. Governors do not challenge or discuss school standards and pupils' achievement often enough. This limits their ability to fully appreciate the

work that is required to raise standards and enable all groups of pupils to achieve as well as they can.

The school improvement plan sets out four key priorities to support school improvement. However, it does not focus enough on the impact that actions are expected to have on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils across the school. It does not identify outcomes expected for each group of pupils in every class. As a result, senior leaders' and governors' ability to judge whether the plans are successful is limited.

### **External support**

The trust has provided substantial and effective support for the school. It has been pro-active in identifying additional aspects of concern and took swift action to instigate a notice to improve. Significant support has been provided to improve the quality of teaching, learning and leadership. Headteachers from within the trust visit the school regularly and provide targeted and effective support to improve the skills of teachers and school leaders. Directors from the trust supported the governing body in the appointment process of the new headteacher. The trust has also worked well with school leaders to broker support from the local authority in specific services such as behaviour support, early years advisory support and support from the special educational needs team.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**