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14 July 2017

Ms Catherine Nyman
Salford Priors CofE Primary School
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Dear Ms Nyman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Salford Priors CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4–5 July 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 September 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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Coventry, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the governing body supports and holds leaders to account for the school's performance
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are reliable and used to target extra help to where it is needed
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders correctly identify the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and then provide appropriate support.
- Improve attendance and punctuality, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, by reinforcing to parents the importance of attending school regularly and on time.
- Improve the early years provision so that all children make good progress by ensuring that:
 - adults have sufficient expertise to assess children's attainment accurately
 - teachers plan activities that engage, inspire and challenge children and help them make rapid progress
 - the outdoor learning area is well organised and better used to help children learn effectively.
- Improve teaching so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce in lessons
 - teachers use information about what pupils already understand, know and can do to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' ability
 - adults use information about pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to support them in class
 - adults are trained to teach phonics effectively.

Reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 4 July 2017 to 5 July 2017

Evidence

The inspector observed pupils' learning across the school and in a range of subjects. The interim headteacher and the other senior leader in school accompanied the inspector for some of the observations. The inspector looked at pupils' work, spoke to pupils about their learning and observed behaviour in lessons. The inspector met formally with a group of pupils and observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.

Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the other senior leader in school and a range of staff. The inspector spoke to three members of the interim executive board, a representative from the local authority, two representatives from the Diocese of Coventry and the headteacher of a local teaching school, as well as parents and representatives from the Friends of Salford Priors School. The inspector spoke on the telephone to the principal of a second teaching school.

The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, health and safety, current pupils' progress and attendance. The inspector also reviewed minutes of interim executive board meetings and multi-agency task group meetings.

Context

As there was no effective governance at the time of the last inspection, an interim executive board (IEB) was put in place in October 2016. Following September's inspection, almost all leaders and teaching staff resigned and left the school at the end of the autumn term. A key role for the IEB and the local authority in the autumn term, therefore, was to recruit staff for the spring term.

In January 2017, a new interim headteacher took up post. A further senior leader was seconded from a teaching school and teachers joined the school from a second teaching school and a supply agency. The school is currently fully staffed, although none of the teaching staff have permanent contracts. The current staffing structure is in place until the end of the autumn term 2017.

The IEB and senior leaders have spent considerable time looking to secure the long-term future for the school. While it was initially hoped that a solution would be agreed by January 2017, as set out in the statement of action submitted to the Department for Education, this has yet to be resolved. The future of the school beyond December 2017 remains uncertain. Discussions involving the diocese, the local authority and the regional schools commissioner are ongoing. The local authority has indicated its intention to continue to support the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

In January 2017, it became clear that the school had deeper and more profound issues than had been identified at the time of the last inspection. These included significant health and safety concerns. There were no effective systems and processes in place in relation to the curriculum, monitoring of teaching, assessment or attendance. The IEB, new leadership team and staff have therefore spent considerable time and energy addressing these areas of concern.

The IEB brings significant, relevant expertise to the governance of the school. Members of the IEB have high expectations of leaders. They provide challenge and support to the school's leadership and external agencies to improve the quality of the education provided for pupils. The minutes of the IEB meetings accurately reflect the developments which have taken place and the areas requiring further improvement. Together, the IEB and the current school leadership show drive and determination to bring about positive change and to work towards sustainable improvements.

The school is now a safe environment. The school is clean, bright and welcoming. Displays reflect a wide variety of topics, such as keeping safe online and British values, as well as celebrating pupils' work from a range of subjects.

The school's safeguarding policy has been reviewed and is in line with current legislation. Staff have all received safeguarding training and they are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. The senior leadership team works closely with external agencies. Records are detailed, fit for purpose and stored securely. The chair of the IEB checks the single central record on a regular basis.

Following the last inspection, previous school leaders, IEB members and the local authority developed an action plan to address the areas for improvement. While expected outcomes are clear, the actions are not detailed enough to explain how the outcomes will be achieved. The current leadership team has not updated this plan. The interim headteacher regularly reports to the IEB on the activities that have taken place in relation to each of the areas for improvement. However, the impact of actions, next steps and timescales are not set out consistently. The action plan is to be rewritten in readiness for the autumn term. This will outline how the school will secure further, rapid improvement.

Teachers have received training in the school's assessment system which was introduced in September 2016. They are developing their understanding of the system and, as a result, assessments are becoming more accurate. The local authority has worked with the school to moderate judgements about pupils' attainment at the end of Reception Year, Year 2 and Year 6. This moderation has shown that teachers are accurate in their judgements. Leaders are now clearer about the amount of progress pupils are making and the proportion of pupils working at the standards expected for their age. However, they are not yet able

to talk about outcomes for particular groups of pupils, for example pupils who speak English as an additional language or those eligible for pupil premium funding.

Leaders are now clear which pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding and the funding is being spent to help address these pupils' barriers to learning. This includes access to extra-curricular activities and counselling to support social and emotional needs. However, progress information is not yet used to inform leaders and members of the IEB as to whether these activities are helping the pupils to catch up with their peers. The recommended review of the school's use of pupil premium funding has not yet taken place. This is to be undertaken as a matter of urgency and is planned for early in the autumn term.

In January 2017, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were not accurately identified and, as a result, pupils were not accessing the support they require. The school's register of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been completely reviewed and is now accurate. Parents are more involved in assessment processes and are kept informed of developments. Every child who has a special educational need and/or disability now has an individual plan outlining the interventions and approaches which are in place to support them. Systems are being developed to ensure that class teachers know about individual pupils' needs and the strategies which will help them to learn most effectively. Staff are also starting to measure the progress pupils make during a particular intervention so that they can identify which actions are most successful. These approaches now need time to embed in order to impact on pupils' outcomes.

On arrival at the school, senior leaders identified that the school's curriculum was not fit for purpose. In order to address this, half-termly whole-school topics, linked to the national curriculum, were introduced for the spring and summer terms. To date, teachers have focused on addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge, especially in relation to literacy and mathematical skills. Additionally, subject specialist teachers from a local teaching school are supporting the breadth of the curriculum for older key stage 2 pupils by teaching lessons in a range of subjects, including science, drama, history and physical education. Leaders are aware that the next step is to ensure that the curriculum enables as many pupils as possible to work at the standard expected for their age and that all areas of the national curriculum are included. Senior leaders are developing a two-year curriculum to be implemented in the autumn term.

At the time of the last inspection, the school's website did not meet the required standard as it did not contain all the statutory information required. This is still the case. Members of the IEB and senior leaders have plans to address this before the start of the autumn term.

In January 2017, parents were anxious and concerned about the education their

children were receiving. The new leadership team and staff have worked hard to foster positive relationships with parents. Parents now have a developing confidence in the school. Relationships with the wider community are recovering, and the community welcomes the new 'open door' approach.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Senior leaders have worked hard to establish clear expectations for the new teaching team. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and provide teachers with feedback in order to help them further improve. Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from access to regular professional development. This includes in-class coaching. As a result, teachers make effective use of lesson time and the resources available. Pupils are encouraged to try hard and they are recognised for their efforts. This is helping to develop better attitudes to learning.

Due to the small number of pupils, staff have been able to get to know each pupil very well and they are increasingly planning activities to match pupils' individual needs, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, planning needs to be further refined to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for all the age groups and abilities within each class.

In early years and key stage 1, phonics sessions take place on a daily basis. Some staff training has taken place, and pupils respond well to the sessions. More pupils are now using their phonics skills to help them when reading and writing. Adults promote a love of reading by sharing favourite books, for example through 'book of the week' assembly and 'reading heroes' who encourage use of the school library. Pupils have opportunities to write independently and at length. This is making a difference to both the quality and the quantity of pupils' work. However, many pupils, especially the older ones, still have some way to go to reach the standards expected for their age. In mathematics, problem-solving and reasoning skills are now taught but it is too early to comment on the impact this is having on pupils' outcomes.

Teaching in the early years has improved since the last inspection. An experienced teacher is leading the team, and careful planning ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. Activities are adapted to respond to the children's interests, helping to engage the children more fully in their learning and to become more independent. Children are now assessed more accurately.

The early years outdoor learning area has been closed since January 2017 due to health and safety concerns. It has been completely renovated and is due to re-open before the end of the summer term. Staff have compensated for the lack of an outdoor learning environment by making regular use of the school's other outdoor areas. The children have also been involved in planting raised beds and creating a 'hungry caterpillar story walk'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Over the last two years, pupils, especially those in key stage 2, have experienced several changes of class teacher and headteacher. This has been unsettling for many. Staff have put strategies in place, such as time-out areas, to help pupils who require them deal with anger management issues. Although some pupils continue to demonstrate challenging behaviour, members of staff who have been in the school for a while report that behaviour has improved.

During the inspection, the great majority of pupils played cooperatively together at breaktimes and lunchtimes and were engaged in their lessons. Pupils speak positively about the school, and the majority of children say that they enjoy coming to school. Adults actively model the behaviours that they expect from the children.

Pupils are responding well to the increased expectations of teachers. Older pupils say that while lessons are more challenging, they are also 'easier because teachers explain things well'. However, pupils are not always clear about what they are aiming to achieve or how they can improve their work.

Strategies to improve attendance are beginning to have an impact. In the autumn term, attendance was less than 91%, while in the summer term it is currently 97%. Attendance of almost all groups of pupils has improved over the year, including those who are disadvantaged. Punctuality is also improving. The new informal entry to school, alongside immediate contact with parents whose children are absent, is making a positive difference. Leaders have identified the need to ensure that these improvements are maintained and further developed.

Outcomes for pupils

Evidence from school data shows that almost all pupils have made progress during the spring and summer terms. However, too many pupils are not making the amount of progress that would be expected and they are not catching up quickly enough with their peers nationally. This is particularly the case for older key stage 2 pupils in writing and mathematics.

Pupils' progress and outcomes are strongest in reading. Mathematics is the weakest area. While some pupils have made rapid progress, leaders recognise that progress for many has not been quick enough, particularly for the oldest pupils who have the biggest gaps in their knowledge. Pupils' books show that pupils in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 3 have made the greatest progress since January 2017. Leaders acknowledge that rapid improvement is required, particularly for pupils in Years 4 and 5.

All the children currently in Reception Year have achieved a good level of development and are well prepared to start Year 1.

All the children currently in Year 1 have reached the expected standard in the

phonics screening check.

Initial information about outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2017 appear to mirror the overall school picture, with the strongest outcomes in reading and the lowest outcomes in mathematics. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 remain low, but due to a lack of national data and the small number of pupils in each cohort it is not possible to comment more fully on these outcomes at the current time.

External support

Warwickshire local authority has provided effective support to the school from a range of different teams. Specifically, its input has supported developments in health and safety, safeguarding, special educational needs and/or disabilities, assessment at all key stages and attendance. A representative has chaired the multi-agency task group meeting and there has been support for the staffing arrangements. This support has been effective in bringing about positive changes and is welcomed by the IEB and senior leaders.

Staffing in school has been supported by the Cotswold Teaching School Alliance, Tudor Grange Academies Trust and Shires Teaching School Alliance. In addition to class teaching, this input includes opportunities to broaden pupils' access to a range of specialist subject teachers and valuable leadership support, particularly in relation to the development of the curriculum, assessment systems and improvements in teaching and learning. This support has stabilised the educational provision for pupils across the school and has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

A diocesan chaplain representative provided pastoral support for the school in the autumn term. The diocese has recently secured funding for a family support worker.