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22 September 2017

Mrs J Moore and Mrs E O'Leary  
Co-headteachers  
The Meadows School  
School Road  
Wooburn Green  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP10 0HF

Dear Mrs Moore and Mrs O'Leary

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Meadows School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 and 14 September 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 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 November 2016.

Having considered all 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.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Create a climate and culture of safety so that all pupils feel safe and secure by ensuring that:
  - all adults have a clear understanding of their legal and moral obligations to make sure that all pupils are and feel safe at school
  - pupils in key stages 1 and 2 know that all adults will treat them with respect and respond appropriately to their concerns
  - steps are taken to eliminate remaining issues of bullying and boisterous behaviour
  - action is taken to improve attendance for those groups of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate progress for all groups of pupils, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do so that work is pitched at the right level
  - ensuring that teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach
  - improving the way in which reading is taught throughout the school
  - ensuring that pupils develop basic skills in writing and develop these skills when learning other subjects
  - making sure that pupils develop and apply their thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
  - spreading leadership responsibilities more evenly across the school to build a sustainable leadership structure
  - making sure that subject leaders are better equipped to lead and develop their subject teams
  - providing a rich and balanced curriculum that enables pupils to develop their skills and excel across subjects
  - making sure that fundamental British values are promoted more widely through the curriculum.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 September 2017**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the co-headteachers, the curriculum leaders, the English and mathematics subject leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of the governing body and another governor, and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents at the start of the school day and the 37 responses from the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Responses from 12 staff survey replies were also taken into consideration.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a number of staff changes. One of the co-headteachers was on maternity leave during the spring term. She returned for one day per week during the summer term. One of the assistant headteachers was on maternity leave during the spring and part of the summer term. She returned to her post part-time in July. She continues this role on a part-time basis. An experienced headteacher supported the school for two days per week alongside the co-headteacher during the spring and summer terms. Two teachers left at the end of the spring term. Another teacher left at the end of the summer term. Currently these posts are being filled by agency staff.

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

- School leaders have a clear plan in place to bring about improvement. However, the monitoring of improvements is not rigorous enough. As a result, outcomes for pupils have not improved quickly enough.
- Turbulence in staffing has contributed to a slow rate of improvement. School leaders have taken steps to eradicate inadequate teaching, but securing strong, effective teaching has not been wholly successful. As a result, some classes have had a number of temporary teachers. This has had a negative impact on pupils' learning.
- The local authority and a local teaching school have supported senior leaders and subject leaders to develop their skills and increase their effectiveness. However, this support has not resulted in rapid improvement. Subject leaders are not monitoring outcomes for pupils well enough. They do not check the quality of pupils' learning in lessons and over time with sufficient rigour.
- The curriculum leaders have started to map out learning in a range of subjects in all year groups. But currently it is not well balanced. It does not provide a rich and varied range of exciting opportunities to engage and enthuse pupils in their learning. Curriculum leaders do not monitor the delivery of the curriculum well enough. For example, some class timetables

do not routinely show that all the required subjects are being taught in all classes.

- Currently, there is no subject leader for personal, social, health and economic education. As a result, it is not clear whether this required provision is planned routinely in all year groups.
- The English and mathematics subject leaders are beginning to put plans in place to improve provision. New resources have been purchased and staff have received training to improve their teaching of writing and mathematics. However, checks on staff knowledge and skills in teaching English and mathematics have not been carried out. Subject leaders do not check whether new resources and policies are being implemented effectively.
- Senior leaders have been successful in improving the culture of safety within the school. They acted swiftly to ensure that all adults understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Effective support was provided by the interim co-headteacher during the spring and summer terms to bring about rapid improvement to the safeguarding culture and behaviour of pupils. The new vision and values are understood well by adults and pupils and this has had a positive impact on the school climate. Alongside the school values, school leaders have actively promoted pupils' understanding of British values. Pupils have a good understanding of the values, such as mutual respect, the rule of law and democracy. During the inspection, pupils used voting booths to vote for their preferred candidates to become the new school anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Governors make regular checks on pupils' welfare, behaviour and safety. They seek pupils' views and carry out monitoring visits to check on the implementation of the behaviour policy. Governors check on pupils' personal development and their understanding and opinions on the welfare arrangements within the school.
- Governors know that there is more to be done to rapidly improve the school. They are proactive in their challenge and seek to secure successful sponsorship arrangements for the school's transition to academy status as quickly as possible.

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

- Teaching is not strong enough across the school. Not all teachers are planning activities that are matched well enough to pupils' learning needs. As a result, some pupils find the work too easy and some too difficult. This limits the progress that they make.
- Assessment procedures are not fully understood by all teachers. This means that some of the assessments made about pupils' learning are not secure. Some teachers are not using the information about pupils' learning well enough to plan lessons to meet pupils' learning needs.

- Some teachers do not adjust the planned activities during lessons well enough to increase rates of pupils' progress. They do not respond quickly enough to pupils' learning needs. As a result, pupils' progress is not yet good.
- Most teaching assistants work well with pupils to support their learning. However, sometimes teaching assistants are too passive during whole-class teaching. They are not used well enough to support the learning of individuals and groups of pupils in this part of the lesson.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils respond well to instructions. Lessons generally run smoothly because teachers have created a calm, orderly environment for learning.
- Teachers are using the new behaviour policy consistently well. This means that pupils are clear of the expectations for their behaviour in class. Rewards are used well to motivate pupils.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- Senior leaders have established a system for rewarding good and improving attendance. This has had a positive effect on overall attendance. Pupils' attendance has improved. Pupils know that anything below 95% attendance is not good enough. However, there is room for further improvement. There are still too many pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.
- School leaders have been successful in creating a calm, caring environment for learning. Pupils behave well and respond quickly to adult instructions. They have positive attitudes to learning. Mutual respect between adults and pupils is clearly evident.
- Pupils say behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. They understand the system of rewards for good behaviour and know the consequences if their behaviour falls below the school's high expectations.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying have reduced significantly. They understand about different types of bullying and know how to keep safe when using computers and mobile technologies. They also trust adults to sort out any issues that arise.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They recognise the improvements that have been made within the school and that adults respond well to their personal and academic needs.
- The new school values are understood by pupils. They know that kindness, respect and compassion are important qualities. Pupils understand about perseverance, compassion and community spirit because school leaders have placed a high priority on creating a positive climate for learning. Pupils know that they are valued within the school community.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

- Pupils' rates of progress are not fast enough. Standards remain too low. The school's own information on pupils' achievement shows that last year, pupils in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 did not make enough progress to enable them to catch up. They are not prepared well enough for their next stage of learning.
- Evidence from lesson observations and through looking at pupils' work over time shows that expectations are not high enough. Pupils are not guided well enough about what they need to do to improve their work. Too often, low standards of presentation, spelling and punctuation are not picked up. As a result, pupils make unnecessary mistakes.
- In mathematics, pupils do not always follow the school's expectations of using rulers when drawing shapes, for example, and teachers do not emphasise routinely the importance of this.
- Outcomes for pupils in Year 2 were much lower than expected and much lower than the previous year. Too few pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and no pupils achieved a greater depth of understanding in any subject.
- At the end of Year 6, standards improved overall. A higher proportion of pupils in this year group achieved the expected standard in reading, writing, and mathematics and in English grammar, spelling and punctuation. More pupils achieved the higher standard in reading and mathematics. However, no pupils achieved the higher standard in writing.
- At the end of Year 1, a higher proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check than in the previous year. However, less than half of the pupils who retook the check in Year 2 reached the expected standard.
- At the end of Reception in 2017, more children achieved a good level of development and were well-prepared for learning in Year 1 than in the previous year.

## **External support**

The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and Chepping View Academy have provided a wide range of support to the school in recent years. There has been limited impact from the external support received to improve rapidly the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress and also to improve the quality of leadership and management across the school. The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust focus group, which monitors the school's progress, has recognised that the school is not making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

**Priorities for further improvement:**

- Take urgent action to ensure that assessments of pupils' learning are accurate and that teachers use this information to plan high-quality learning activities for all groups of pupils.