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Mrs Philippa Leftley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Leftley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Green Oak Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to your school on 17–18 October 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 me during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's last 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 January and February 2017.

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 action 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 interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Guildford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted

website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January and February 2017.

- Increase the impact of leadership and management by:
 - improving the accuracy of assessment so that it provides reliable information about the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in all year groups
 - ensuring that new systems for checking the quality of teaching are implemented in full quickly and rigorously
 - ensuring the curriculum covers a wider range of subjects and that it prepares pupils better for life in modern Britain
 - checking the impact of the pupil premium grant on disadvantaged pupils' progress so that interventions that are not working can be changed in good time
 - ensuring that subject leaders monitor closely the progress pupils make in their subjects.
- Accelerate pupils' progress across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers address clearly the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to reach age-related expectations, particularly in English and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' planning takes account of the needs of all pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is accurate.
- Improve the rates of attendance of all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those who have special needs and/or disabilities so that they at least match national averages.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by eliminating low-level disruption in lessons and boisterous behaviour in open and outside areas.

An external review of the school'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 first monitoring inspection on 17 to 18 October 2017

Evidence

During the inspection I visited every classroom and year group at least twice, assessing the progress pupils were making and talking to them about their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, as they moved around the school and at breaktimes. I visited two assemblies. I held a wide range of meetings with senior and middle leaders; met with the chair of the interim executive board who was accompanied by another board member; and met with a representative of the diocesan board, as well as meeting formally with a representative group of pupils. I held telephone conversations with two different representatives of the local authority and also with the headteacher from another local school who is supporting the headteacher. I also talked to parents at the start of the school day. I scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the local authority's statement of action, the school's action plan, minutes of meetings and notes of visits by the local authority and the interim executive board. Other school records were checked, including the single central record of staff checks, and attendance and behaviour records.

Context

Since the last full inspection the substantive headteacher and a number of teaching and support staff have left the school. A new interim headteacher has been appointed, taking up her position formally in September 2017, after a period in the summer term when she covered for the absence of the substantive headteacher. A number of new teaching and support staff have recently joined the school, including a new assistant headteacher. The interim executive board, appointed shortly before the last inspection, is still in place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and those in positions of governance are working closely with the local authority and diocesan board to rectify the shortcomings identified at the last inspection.

The new headteacher has generated a sense of purpose within the school. After a period of transition, the school is now fully staffed and a new team of leaders and managers is in place. Teaching and support staff are motivated. Together, staff demonstrate a clear and collective aim to improve the school.

The leadership team has injected a sense of urgency into improving all aspects of provision. The action plan to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection is fit for purpose, but now needs to evolve to reflect the progress already made.

Leaders have a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and

the progress pupils are making. A credible baseline exercise has taken place to provide an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment. Leaders and governors will now use this as a starting point to monitor pupil progress in the future.

A full monitoring schedule has been put into place. This involves monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and includes external moderation of leaders' judgements. Early indications are that the schedule is effective and will, in the fullness of time, provide leaders and those in positions of governance with clear and accurate information regarding pupils' outcomes.

Middle leaders are fully involved in the monitoring schedule, but need to play a more effective part in improving the quality of teaching so that pupils' outcomes improve at a more rapid pace. Subject leaders are in place and aware of their responsibilities, but need time to develop the skills required to become fully competent in their roles.

Leaders have identified key aspects of professional development required for staff to improve their practice. Training on assessment, including matching pupils' achievements to age-appropriate curriculum descriptors, has taken place. Policies for providing feedback and for planning work that suits the needs of all pupils are in place and are being implemented by staff.

The professional development of staff is clearly linked to the improvement priorities of the school. Appraisal of staff performance is also linked to the school's improvement priorities. This includes the performance of the headteacher, which is managed effectively by the interim executive board.

Leaders know that staff need time to become fully effective in using new policies and procedures. Ongoing support is planned in coming months. This includes further training for support staff, so that their key role in supporting learning is as effective as it can be.

Leaders have made good progress in strengthening the quality of the curriculum. Pupils now have access to a full curriculum, although the extra-curricular offer is still not as strong as it could be.

Training has taken place to enable staff to promote pupils' personal development more effectively. Leaders have plans to enrich the curriculum further in the coming months. This includes extending the use of the outdoor learning environment to pupils in key stage 2.

The review of the school's use of pupil premium funding, which was recommended at the last full inspection, has not yet taken place. The reasons for this are entirely understandable. However, now that the school is on a more stable footing, the local authority intends to implement the review at the earliest opportunity.

Despite uncertainties, the headteacher is very focused on bringing about the rapid improvements needed at Green Oak. The interim executive board understands that the level of support and guidance required for the headteacher to deliver further rapid improvement needs to be finely balanced. Fragmented support from too many sources risks being detrimental to the good progress already made in improving this school and should be avoided at all costs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders now have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They know where teaching is stronger and where more support is needed. As a result, classroom practice is improving.

Teachers have received training to use the school's new tracking system to assess pupils' progress. This included assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding against age-related descriptors. Leaders' expectations are clear regarding the administration of the new system. At the time of this inspection, it was too soon to judge whether teachers are using the new system effectively. However, early signs are that staff have embraced the recent changes and are positive about the benefits the new arrangements will bring.

The recent baseline exercise of assessing pupils' mathematics and English skills has enabled teachers to understand more clearly the needs of each pupil in their class. They are also better informed about pupils from vulnerable groups. This is particularly the case with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Evidence in pupils' books shows that some are making better progress than in the past. However, classroom visits revealed that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is still inconsistent across the school. In some classrooms, expectations need to be higher still if pupils are to make the rapid progress needed for them to catch up.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

It is clear that leaders' focus on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning is beginning to reap rewards. A new behaviour policy has been introduced and staff are applying it consistently across the school. Because of this, the number of serious behavioural incidents and exclusions has fallen significantly since the start of the new school year.

Pupils themselves approve of the new system of rewards and sanctions introduced as part of the policy. They particularly like the changes to routines at the start of the school day and the new rules about moving around the school.

Levels of supervision are appropriate. Younger pupils told the inspector they feel

safe in school. Older pupils said that behaviour is much better now than it had been, although low-level disruptions to learning have not yet been entirely eliminated.

Improvements to the wider curriculum are beginning to impact positively on improving pupils' personal development. A new personal, social and health education scheme of work has been introduced. Staff are in the early stages of delivering it. Again, it is too early to measure the impact of this new initiative accurately, but early signs are positive.

A new family learning support worker has been appointed with an increase in contracted hours. It is clear this role is already having an impact on improving behaviour, as well as reducing pupils' absence. Overall attendance has improved since this time last year. However, leaders know that they need to monitor the attendance of pupils from vulnerable groups much more closely.

Outcomes for pupils

It is too early to report with any accuracy on the overall outcomes of pupils. The number of pupils in most year groups has fallen this year. Comparison with previous cohorts is not helpful. Nevertheless, it is clear that leaders have begun to address the shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning, and this is impacting positively on the progress pupils are making.

Evidence gathered during classroom visits, including assessing the quality of pupils' work, indicates that many pupils are making better progress than they did in the past.

The legacy of underachievement due to the previous inadequacies in the quality of teaching and learning, as well as pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes to learning, has been arrested. Leaders understand that more needs to be done to improve all aspects of the quality of provision, so that outcomes for pupils improve rapidly to become good or better.

External support

The local authority and diocesan board are continuing to work together to consider the future of the school. No firm decisions have been made yet.

The local authority's support has been active in helping move the school forward to its present position. This includes providing guidance for the headteacher and the interim executive board. Local authority specialists have also advised staff on improving attendance and behaviour, as well as moderating assessment information in key areas such as reading, writing, and the early years.

Good-quality support from the headteacher of another local school has also been

well received by school leaders. This arrangement is particularly effective in providing the day-to-day, hands-on advice and support required by the headteacher when simple solutions are required for seemingly complex problems.

Senior representatives from the diocese and local authority understand that the future success of the school is finely balanced. Currently, leaders and managers within the school are working effectively to address the weaknesses found at the last inspection. Well-judged levels of external challenge and support are now required if the green shoots of improvement evident now are to develop further.