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Mr Chris Kronda
Interim Executive Headteacher
Central CofE Academy
Orchard Street
Chichester
West Sussex
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Dear Mr Kronda

Special measures monitoring inspection of Central CofE Academy

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 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 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 May 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 multi-academy trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2017

- Create a culture that keeps all pupils safe by ensuring that:
 - the trust and leaders understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities
 - leaders systematically record all concerns and communications about pupils' well-being and document their decisions and actions
 - all adults know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.
- Leaders and governors need to ensure that:
 - the trust fully understands the weaknesses in the school and then holds leaders to account for school improvement
 - they have accurate information about the progress that groups of pupils are making
 - parents have access to a website that contains all of the required information
 - middle leaders have a positive impact on teaching and learning
 - pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum
 - bullying and poor behaviour are properly recorded and appropriate actions are taken to resolve issues and promote improvements.
- Improve teaching and learning and pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they present their work
 - planned learning takes account of pupils' starting points, including the most able
 - teachers recognise and address pupils' misconceptions and poor spelling
 - pupils get more opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - increasing the number of pupils who come to school regularly
 - improving the moral and social development of pupils, so that they are kinder to each other and more respectful to each other and adults
 - ensuring that there are clear policies and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and that staff understand and follow these consistently.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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 and 18 October 2017

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim executive headteacher, the acting head of school, teachers, teaching assistants and groups of pupils. Meetings were also held with the chair and two members of the governing body, the chief operating officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair of the trust and a trustee. Phone conversations were held with a representative of the diocese and a further trustee. The inspector observed pupils around the school and at breaktimes. The inspector also had informal conversations with a number of parents.

In this first visit, the inspector focused on the school's actions to address the ineffective safeguarding identified at the previous inspection. The inspector also looked carefully at the strength of the plans to improve the school and the actions taken so far.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the chair of governors and a parent governor have resigned. One permanent teacher has left the school. A part-time interim executive headteacher was appointed shortly after the inspection. Three members of the multi-academy trust have joined the governing body. The former vice-chair of the local governing body has been elected as the new chair of governors.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders have acted swiftly to tackle the weaknesses in safeguarding. A review of all aspects of safeguarding has been carried out and many areas have already been improved. Training for staff has covered a number of aspects of safeguarding. Systems to monitor concerns about the welfare of pupils have been strengthened and are now in place in every classroom. The responsibilities of staff and senior leaders are now clear. A new safeguarding monitoring group of staff and governors has been established. It has a clearly defined purpose and meets regularly to consider the well-being of pupils in the school. As a result of these actions, staff have a greater awareness of how to keep pupils safe, and systems are more effective. Although the safeguarding work of staff and leaders has improved, the monitoring of safeguarding is not clear or robust. Consequently, the governing body and the multi-academy trust are not effectively evaluating this aspect of the school's work. Governors and the multi-academy trust have not established how they divide the oversight of safeguarding between them. As a result, they are not able to ensure that safeguarding will remain effective in the future.
- Leaders still do not fully understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. This

is because the different responsibilities of the multi-academy trust, the local governing body and senior leaders are not clearly separated and identified. Currently, leaders are over-reliant on external support. They do not have effective systems to monitor the performance of the school. One example of this is the school's website. Although this has been improved, it still does not comply with the government's requirements.

- The multi-academy trust acted quickly to strengthen leadership. The interim executive headteacher has brought strength and stability to the school. He is working in partnership with the acting head of school. Together, they have shared senior responsibilities and begun to develop middle leaders. The acting assistant headteacher is supporting the development of assessment and the multi-academy trust's chief operating officer is spending more time in the school. As a result, pupils, staff and parents have increasing confidence in the leadership of the school. However, there are no permanent leaders in place who can bring long-term stability to the school. The school has been without a permanent headteacher for over six months and the multi-academy trust has not yet advertised this post.
- The school improvement plan is fit for purpose. It covers all the areas that need to be improved and has some milestones against which to judge progress. There is already evidence of progress in the delivery of the plan. A good example of this is the successful introduction of the new approach to tracking all concerns and communications about pupils' well-being. The plan is understood well by staff and has been shared with parents.
- The multi-academy trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose. It does not guide the school's improvement or ensure that priorities are tackled. Current targets for the school's improvement set out in the statement are unrealistic. Although multi-academy trust staff visit regularly, they do not effectively evaluate the school's progress or direct future work for senior leaders. Consequently, the trust and the local governing body cannot judge the progress that the school is making towards coming out of special measures.
- The external review of governance recommended at the last inspection was carried out in September. At the time of this monitoring visit, the draft report had just been considered by the governing body. The review found that governors were committed to improving the school and supporting the community. However, it also found that the governing body was newly in post and lacked experience. The review recommended a range of appropriate actions which have yet to be addressed.
- The external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding has been arranged but has not yet taken place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Leaders are determined to tackle weak teaching. A system for regularly monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been introduced. Classrooms are well ordered and wall displays show examples of high-quality work and provide useful information to support pupils' learning. Most pupils behave sensibly in their classrooms and focus on their work. Pupils say that behaviour has improved since the inspection and that their learning is interrupted less often. This is because teachers are more consistent in their approach to behaviour management. As a result, low-level interruptions in lessons have reduced.
- Leaders are aware that assessment has been weak and that this needs to be strengthened to ensure that pupils' progress from their starting points can be accurately measured. Leaders have identified the need to ensure that lessons always meet pupils' needs. Pupils said that this was not always the case. They report that some work is not challenging enough, while other work can be too hard. This is because teachers do not always know what pupils understand and can do.
- Leaders have reviewed all teaching in the school. This review provided detailed information on strengths in teaching and areas that need to improve. This has identified that a significant proportion of current teaching, learning and assessment remains inadequate. Leaders have high expectations of the progress that teachers will make. They are currently seeking the support of a local teaching school alliance. As a result of this work, leaders have a developing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are beginning to provide targeted improvement activities.
- The school's targets for improvement in the quality of teaching are not yet sufficiently detailed. The multi-academy trust and local governing body have not identified how they will monitor the impact of actions to improve teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- The behaviour of pupils around the school has improved because staff are more consistent in how they manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders expect all staff to address poor behaviour when they see it. Staff have been given support and training in how to do this. For example, all staff received training in how to respond to tricky situations. Staff report that now incidents are dealt with much more effectively and consistently by all staff. They say that pupils are happier because they know where they stand. Pupils say that staff listen to them and deal with any concerns they have. A system has been introduced to improve communication with parents about pupils' behaviour and progress at school. This is popular with parents and pupils.
- Behaviour during breaktimes has improved. However, pupils still identify this as a time when they do not always feel safe. This is because some pupils are inconsiderate of others when involved in physical play. This results in accidents

and some unkind behaviour. Pupils also report that some unresolved friendship issues can spill over into lesson times and get in the way of the learning.

- Improvements to assembly and collective worship have had a positive impact on the culture of the school. A focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is making a good contribution to the school's developing culture of kindness and respect.

External support

The multi-academy trust has provided some external support to leaders and governors since the inspection. The statement of action does not set out how and when external support will be accessed. The school's senior leaders received advice and guidance when preparing their improvement plans. An external review of the quality of safeguarding took place. There is not yet evidence that external support is being used effectively to increase the rate of improvement in the school.