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Mrs S Cosgrove
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Dear Mrs Cosgrove

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nonsuch Primary School

Following my visit with Nicola Harwood, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy 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 during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, make consistently good progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - use information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to plan activities which are well matched to pupils' abilities
 - have high expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils produce in lessons
 - ask questions that make pupils think deeply and then insist on full and detailed answers
 - give pupils feedback that helps them to know how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - the very poor behaviour of a minority of pupils does not prevent other pupils from learning and feeling safe in school
 - teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and do not tolerate low-level disruption in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that there is a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and the behaviour and achievement of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all senior leaders have clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that are understood by pupils, parents and staff
 - leaders regularly use assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind and then help them to catch up
 - leaders routinely analyse information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of groups of pupils, in order to identify patterns and tackle weaknesses
 - training for teachers is targeted effectively at issues and individuals where it is most needed
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to rapidly improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - the sport premium grant is spent effectively to sustainably improve pupils' participations in sport
 - the curriculum is interesting and engaging so that it contributes positively to pupils' academic and personal development
 - extra-curricular activities make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural education.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17 October 2017 to 18 October 2017

Evidence

The inspectors observed pupils' learning in English and mathematics lessons in key stages 1 and 2. Children's learning was also observed in the early years. The executive headteacher and head of school accompanied the inspectors for some of the observations. The inspectors looked at pupils' work, including across a range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics, spoke to pupils about their learning and observed behaviour in lessons. The inspectors met formally with a group of pupils and observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school and other school leaders, including those who are responsible for special educational needs, English, mathematics, physical education (PE), safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. A further meeting was held with a member of the local governing body and the chair of the academy trustees.

The inspectors evaluated a range of documents, including the school's analysis of current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Additional documentation was evaluated, such as information about how teachers' performance is managed, the school's action plan, safeguarding information and policies.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, there have been a number of changes in the staffing structure. A stable teaching and leadership structure has been in place since September 2017. The leadership team now comprises an executive headteacher, head of school and two assistant headteachers. One new teacher joined the school in September 2017. Pupil numbers have declined and currently there are 20 children in the Reception class. There continues to be a relatively high level of pupil mobility, with pupils leaving and joining different year groups across the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Following the findings of the last monitoring visit, leaders have taken effective action to accelerate improvements across the school. The governors and trustees have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school's performance and monitor the progress the school is making carefully. The school's development plan identifies the key actions which need to be implemented to address the weaknesses which remain in the school. Leaders and governors review the effectiveness of the actions undertaken, and adapt and change the development priorities where needed. This is helping to accelerate the improvements being made across the school, especially in behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. There was a 70% turnover in staff over the last academic year, which led to

instability in leadership and hindered the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. This has now been addressed. From September 2017, a stable staffing structure has been in place. There is a clear leadership structure with two assistant headteachers increasing the leadership capacity of the school. The roles and responsibilities of leaders have been clarified and are understood by all staff. However, the assistant headteachers are new to their posts and are, therefore, still developing in their roles. They provide additional support to some teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. However, this support has only recently begun and therefore the impact is yet to be seen.

Teachers now use the school's assessment system consistently. Leaders have gone to great lengths to moderate the teachers' assessments to make sure they reflect accurately what pupils can do. Pupil progress meetings are held regularly to discuss the progress of all pupils. Leaders identify which pupils have fallen behind and additional support is provided for these pupils. Leaders have a detailed picture of pupils' progress, including the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. However, although leaders check that teachers are challenging all pupils, there is not yet a detailed enough focus on ensuring that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged sufficiently.

Leaders recognise that many pupils in key stage 2 have not made the progress they should from the end of key stage 1. This is because some of the information at the end of key stage 1 historically is unreliable. The school's current assessment information shows that in some year groups pupils make better progress, especially where the teaching is stronger. Leaders have identified where pupils do not make the progress they should and additional support is provided to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these classes.

Pupils understand the importance of good attendance. They value the reward systems such as the 'attendance bear' which is awarded to the class with the highest weekly attendance. Last year, overall attendance declined. However, since September 2017, leaders have taken more effective action to address the attendance issues. An attendance officer works with the school and provides support to families to help them improve their child's attendance. Leaders monitor attendance in much greater depth. Weekly meetings are held to review the attendance information of individual pupils, and further support is provided where their attendance does not improve. As a result, attendance in the current academic year has improved and is currently in line with national averages.

From September 2017, one leader took overall responsibility for the monitoring and management of behaviour across the school. Staff know whom to seek advice and support from when dealing with behaviour issues in their classes and around school. In every class teachers record incidents of inappropriate behaviour in a behaviour log. The leader then carefully checks these behaviour records on a weekly basis. Incidents are followed up and additional support is provided for pupils who are

struggling to manage their behaviour. The leader also meets with other behaviour leads from across the multi-academy trust (MAT) to review further ways to improve behaviour. A whole-school behaviour audit was commissioned this half term. The audit recognised strengths in behaviour across the school. It also identified further areas for leaders to focus on to continue to improve behaviour, such as higher engagement with parents. Leaders have already responded to the findings in the report and continue to develop behaviour management across the school. As a result of the actions taken by leaders to address behaviour, this year there are significantly reduced incidents of inappropriate behaviour and less exclusions across the school. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school was also greatly improved, with very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

The executive headteacher places a high priority on providing high-quality support and training for all staff, especially on how to manage pupils' behaviour more effectively. All staff have received training to help them understand and support pupils' social and emotional needs. The impact of this training can be seen clearly in the much more positive and calm atmosphere around the school. Pupils also say that behaviour has improved and that staff understand how to help them. Pupils say that they 'feel staff value them more'.

This year, leaders are focusing on further improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have received training on developing pupils' attitudes to learning and their skills for learning. Where the teaching is stronger, the impact of this training can be seen already, with pupils engaged in lessons and demonstrating very positive attitudes to learning. These pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in other classes, the skills for and attitudes to learning are not developed well enough and consequently pupils are making less progress in all subjects.

Leaders have a clear understanding of teachers' development needs. Appraisal systems are in place and identify clear targets for teachers. Bespoke training and support is provided for individual teachers. The executive headteacher ensures that best practice is shared across the school and the MAT to help teachers improve their practice. However, the support for some individuals is still at an early stage and is yet to result in improvements in their teaching. Leaders recognise that the monitoring of teaching and the impact on learning must be even more detailed to ensure that rapid improvements are made to the overall quality of teaching across the school.

The leadership and management of the pupil premium grant continues to be in the early stages of development. There has been a lack of focus and urgency in driving improvements in this area and, until recently, the monitoring of the spending has not been robust. The leadership of this area is yet to show impact, although a review has now been scheduled to audit the current provision. Leaders acknowledge that this is an area that needs to show more rapid improvements. There is still a lack of clarity in the systems and processes used to identify disadvantaged pupils'

specific needs. This means that the right support for some disadvantaged pupils is not in place quickly enough.

A new leader of PE was employed in September 2017. The leader has developed a clear action plan to ensure that the sport premium funding is used effectively. A range of after-school sports clubs are in place. The funding is used to secure the services of a sports coach who is highly experienced. The sports coach leads PE sessions to support and develop the teaching skills of staff. The sports coach is also training Year 6 pupils as sports leaders. These pupils will lead games at playtimes for younger pupils. However, their training is not yet completed. Pupils have entered sports competitions across the MAT including football, swimming and cross-country. Pupils are also scheduled to enter future competitions such as badminton and dodge ball. The leader has conducted a full audit of PE resources and staff skills. He now plans to monitor planning, teaching and learning in lessons and hold pupil discussions. However, the leader is new to this role and the systems and processes planned have not been fully implemented. While additional sports funding is now being used appropriately, it is too early to judge the impact of the use of this funding.

A review of the wider curriculum shows a variable picture across the school. In some year groups, pupils have the opportunity to learn about a range of different subjects and topics. For example, Year 1 science books show pupils have learned about plants, the senses and changes in the seasons. Year 6 pupils had the opportunity to dissect a heart, which they say 'made learning real'. However, these wider opportunities are not consistent across the school. In some year groups, pupils have limited opportunities to study science. In addition to this, in some year groups teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in science are too low.

In art, a specialist art teacher works with pupils across the school. Pupils have the opportunity to study a range of artists such as Monet and Kandinsky and their work demonstrates that they are developing a range of art skills. However, there are very limited examples of pupils studying subjects such as history and geography. Where there are examples, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Planning in these subjects does not build on what pupils already know. Consequently, pupils' skills and knowledge in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics are still not developed sufficiently. The curriculum planning remains underdeveloped. The curriculum leader does not monitor the wider curriculum in sufficient detail to ensure that it is meeting pupils' learning needs. Leaders recognise that this is an area which needs to be addressed with urgency.

Pupils feel that they have more opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities such as multi-skills, football, badminton and netball. However, pupils also say that they would also like other non-sporting clubs such as drama, art and music, 'as we know not everyone is sporty'. Pupils say that they have few opportunities to go on trips.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders' high focus on providing training and support to teachers is beginning to show improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, these improvements are still not consistent across the school and some weak teaching remains. Where teaching is stronger, teachers plan work which specifically meets pupils' learning needs. For example, Year 6 English and mathematics books demonstrate that teachers carefully identify where pupils are in their learning and provide tasks and activities which take their learning forward from this point. As a result, these pupils are making rapid progress from the start of this year.

However, this is not consistent across the school, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. In some classes teachers do not plan work to meet pupils' needs carefully enough. There is either too little or too much challenge for some pupils, which leads to them becoming bored and disengaged in learning. On occasion, this leads to low-level disruption within these lessons.

Teachers are beginning to use the school's assessment system more effectively. Leaders check their assessments to ensure that they are consistent and accurately reflect what pupils can do. However, some teachers do not use this information in their planning well enough to help pupils make rapid progress in their learning in lessons.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and the quantity of work they produce are too variable across the school. In some classes, teachers' expectations are very high. In Year 6 English books there are many examples of writing which show that pupils are making good progress from the beginning of the year. However, in other classes teachers' expectations are far too low and there are inconsistent expectations from one lesson to the next. Current books show that in some year groups pupils produce work which is of an acceptable standard in one lesson, but this is then followed by examples of work of a much lower standard. In some year groups, expectations are consistently too low.

Some teachers and teaching assistants use highly effective questioning. The questions they pose challenge pupils' thinking and helps the teachers to find out what pupils can do. These teachers then plan work which is matched closely to pupils' needs and pupils' learning is taken forward rapidly. However, the quality of this is inconsistent. Where teaching is less effective, weak questioning skills do not enable teachers to find out what pupils can do and some pupils, especially the most able, do not make sufficient progress in their learning.

The school's marking and feedback policy has been reviewed and is being used in all classes. However, the effectiveness of how teachers use it is variable. In some classes, pupils receive feedback which accurately identifies their misunderstandings and helps pupils to learn from their mistakes, especially in mathematics and writing.

However, there are also examples in some classes where the feedback to pupils does not identify their mistakes so pupils continue to repeat them from one lesson to the next. This does not help pupils to make progress in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils say that behaviour is definitely improving, a view shared by parents who spoke to the inspectors during the visit. This was clearly evident during the monitoring visit. Behaviour observed around the school was generally calm and orderly. There were no significant behaviour issues during the visit, and where some pupils did require additional support to manage their behaviour, this was provided well by staff. The training staff have received on how to support pupils with specific needs has been very effective. Leaders have ensured that, where needed, detailed behaviour plans are in place to support individual pupils. These plans identify pupils' specific needs and how to support them if behaviour issues arise. As a result, the behaviour of these pupils has improved and they are more settled in school. Pupils show a strong awareness and tolerance of the specific needs of some pupils. They are supportive of their peers. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying happens rarely. Pupils are confident that if there are issues with bullying, teachers deal with it quickly. Nevertheless, pupils say that they would like behaviour to continue to improve further.

The behaviour policy was reviewed at the beginning of term and staff use the policy more consistently. However, where teaching is weaker, low-level disruption remains in the classes because pupils' learning needs are not being met. This leads to pupils becoming bored and restless.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes at the end of 2017 in all key stages showed a further decline in the school's performance. Instability in staffing, including teachers and leaders, meant that in some year groups inadequate teaching led to pupils underachieving. In addition to this, some behaviour issues remained across the school. Actions taken by the executive headteacher now mean that there is a stable staffing structure and behaviour is vastly improved. The continued significant decline in school performance has been stemmed and currently some pupils are beginning to show more rapid improvements in their learning.

The proportions of children in the early years in 2017 achieving a good level of development declined slightly. The proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics check at the end of 2017 declined more significantly.

In reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017, standards dropped from 2016. At the end of key stage 2, progress in reading improved. However, progress in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 showed a continued decline.

In other year groups at the end of 2017, pupils made variable rates of progress. Where teaching was stronger, pupils made better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in some year groups pupils' progress in all subjects was unacceptably slow. The executive headteacher recognises this and additional support is in place to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in line with their peers. Where teaching is stronger, they make better progress. The executive headteacher recognises that the progress of the most able pupils needs to be tracked in more detail to ensure that they are making the progress of which they are capable.

The school's assessment system is now used consistently across the school. Leaders have checked that the work in pupils' books matches the assessments recorded and teachers have a better understanding of how to use the system. This means that leaders can now track pupils' progress in more detail and more accurately. Work in books currently shows that pupils in some year groups are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Year 6. Leaders know where weaker teaching is hindering pupils' progress and are taking action to address this.

External support

The executive headteacher takes advantage of a range of external support. She continually seeks additional support to target key aspects of school improvement. The executive headteacher uses best practice from across the MAT schools to help develop the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers work with one another to plan and deliver lessons. The executive headteacher ensures that teachers' strengths are used to help develop areas of weakness. This is helping to improve teaching and learning. However, there remain areas of weak teaching in the school which need to be addressed more rapidly.

An external adviser is providing coaching and mentoring to some leaders in the school. This is developing the leadership capacity to drive more rapid improvements. This coaching and mentoring is still at an early stage of development and therefore the impact is yet to be seen.