

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 November 2017

Mrs Annie Prouse
Deputy Headteacher
Wheatley Church of England Primary School
Littleworth Road
Wheatley
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX33 1NN

Dear Mrs Prouse

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wheatley Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14–15 November 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 February 2017.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim academy committee, the director of education for the Diocese of Oxford, the chief executive officer of Oxford Diocesan Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's

services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Take urgent action to remedy weaknesses in safeguarding procedures and actively promote pupils' welfare, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - all safeguarding procedures follow the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State and meet statutory requirements
 - the safeguarding policy is kept up to date and shared with staff and parents
 - risk assessments are completed appropriately, kept up to date and implemented effectively.
- Improve the quality of leadership, including governance, and in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - all systems for monitoring the work of the school are robust and leaders and managers are held to account for the progress of all groups of pupils
 - school self-evaluation is accurate and informs school improvement planning more effectively
 - school improvement planning is sharply focused on the impact leaders' actions have on improving outcomes for pupils
 - the progress of all groups of pupils is measured accurately by school leaders
 - middle leaders' skills are developed effectively to enable them to have a greater impact on improvements in teaching, learning and assessment
 - the school's curriculum is further developed to engage and excite pupils in a wide range of learning across all subjects
 - all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and thoroughly checked
 - the school's website meets statutory requirements
 - governors take a full and effective role in challenging leaders to bring about rapid improvement.
- Improving the personal development and welfare of pupils, by:
 - keeping accurate logs of all behaviour and bullying incidents
 - analysing patterns of behaviour in order to enable effective action to be taken to improve it.
- Improve provision and the quality of learning for children in the early years foundation stage, by:
 - providing a range of experiences that challenge and extend children's learning, including for the most able
 - making sure that all adults extend children's learning and develop their

understanding.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, in order to raise standards and ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can do and the progress they can make
 - providing effective support for all groups of pupils to enable them to make at least good progress from their starting points
 - challenging the most able pupils to enable them to make rapid progress, gain a deeper level of understanding and reach high standards
 - increasing teachers' understanding of assessment and the progression of knowledge and skills in each subject
 - making sure that teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are accurate
 - using assessment information to adjust plans and learning in lessons to provide sufficient challenge to all groups of pupils.

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

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 14 November 2017 to 15 November 2017

Evidence

During this monitoring inspection, 13 lessons or part lessons were observed all jointly with the deputy headteacher. I met with you, other staff with significant responsibilities, including the early years leader, and some class teachers. I also met with a variety of personnel from the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) including the chief executive officer, the director of schools and the principal schools' adviser. I also met with two members of the interim academy committee, who act as the school's governing body, including the chair. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I met with a group of six pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 and observed pupils' playtime. I scrutinised school documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, records relating to safeguarding and advisers' notes of visit. The single central record was checked.

Context

Following the previous inspection, the governing body was disbanded. The trust has appointed an interim academy committee to act as the school's governing body. The headteacher is absent and has been away for much of the autumn term. At the beginning of September the deputy headteacher relinquished all teaching responsibility. As a result, a new teacher joined with responsibility for one of the mixed Year 3 and Year 4 classes.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the senior leadership team in September 2017. The SENCo has resigned and will leave at the end of the autumn term 2017. Following a review of the staffing structure during the summer term, staff were allocated new subject leadership responsibilities for the new academic year. At this time, the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) commissioned ongoing additional leadership support from their newly appointed principal schools' adviser.

At the end of the summer term, the school ended its partnership with an external provider who held the responsibility for delivering modern foreign language lessons. This subject is now taught by temporary staff. Two teaching assistants left in July 2017 and two joined in September 2017.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders are not providing clear enough direction in order to start to bring about improvement. Actions since the previous inspection have lacked the necessary rigour, urgency and impact. There is no clear analysis of the school's main strengths and weaknesses as leaders are yet to complete their own self-evaluation of school effectiveness. The pace of improvement is too slow.

The school's action plan is underdeveloped. It does not focus on the right priorities nor is it in sufficient depth. It only takes a short-term view and it does not make clear what will be achieved and by when. Furthermore, leaders' plans do not reason through how the school has evolved since the previous inspection. For example, leaders are not making enough use of the most recent pupil performance outcomes at the end of 2017. The plan does not include measurable milestones or a clear timescale of what is expected and by when. Consequently, leaders' action planning does not set a strong enough steer for the year ahead.

Middle leaders demonstrate early promise in their roles. They are committed to playing their part in the development of the school's curriculum. However, they too lack clarity about what the school is trying to achieve and by when. Although some participated in useful training last term this has had insufficient effect. This was because the training took place before staff were allocated specific subject leadership responsibilities. Consequently, the training did not have the impact that was hoped for. Nevertheless, new subject leaders have begun to formulate action plans. However, it is too soon to see the influence of their actions on raising standards in their subjects.

Systems for managing the performance of staff are at a very early stage. This means that staff are not held to account with sufficient rigour and support is not yet targeted to where it is needed most. School leaders are not monitoring the quality of teaching routinely and so teachers do not receive timely advice on how to improve their skills and expertise. Nevertheless, teachers have received some guidance from a variety of consultants about specific areas of the curriculum. However, because there is no clear, strategic overview of what is trying to be achieved, teachers told the inspector that they find the advice confusing and sometimes conflicting. As a result, teaching is not improving and progress for many pupils is yet to accelerate in order to allow them to catch up lost ground.

As the previous governing body was dissolved there has been no review of governance. The interim academy committee fully understands the scale of change required. However, their efforts to get going have been hampered as leaders' analysis of performance information lacks rigour. As a result, governors are not yet able to question, interrogate or analyse information in enough depth to determine how groups of learners are performing compared to their peers. Nevertheless, governors ask searching and challenging questions. They are also tenacious in the pursuit of the documentation they require in order to become effective. The quality of governance has improved and is beginning to make a difference.

Despite an external review of pupil premium funding in June 2017, work to target the school's spending is particularly underdeveloped. While in recent times the school has formulated a plan, intended actions are not yet underway. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are not receiving the support they require to catch up.

Parents hold a positive view of the school. They are confident in the improvements leaders are making to safeguarding procedures. However, communication from leaders about what the school is trying to achieve is irregular. Nevertheless, due to the dogged efforts of governors, parents are now receiving greater information via the school's website. However, information about the school's policy on exclusions and its approach to the management of pupils' behaviour is not available. The website requires further work in order to be fully compliant.

In very recent times, under the wise counsel of the school's adviser, the deputy headteacher is beginning to establish a more purposeful way forward. For example, together they have helpfully collated some pupil performance information for the autumn term. This is useful in establishing a benchmark upon which to build. The school's adviser is helping to identify the school's priorities with greater precision. Consequently, a stronger sense of direction is beginning to surface.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The pace of improvement to the quality of teaching is too slow. Not enough teaching is securely good or better. Teachers are not yet using performance information to inform their planning. As a result, planned activities do not cater well for pupils' different starting points or capabilities. Consequently, for some pupils, activities are either too hard or too easy. Although pupils generally have a go at completing tasks they do not make the progress they are capable of.

Teachers have not received appropriate training or developmental feedback in order to help them improve. As a result, key skills and competencies referred to in the teachers' standards are underdeveloped. For example, teachers are too slow to adapt tasks to respond to the strengths and needs of pupils. Furthermore, teachers are not ensuring that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. In some classes there is very little coverage of subjects like science, geography and history.

Leaders have set clear expectations for how pupils receive written feedback, reviewing the school's approach with all staff. However, in many classes, despite leaders' clear guidelines, feedback to pupils is falling below what is expected. Insufficient attention is given to allowing pupils to learn from their mistakes and correct errors. As a result, teachers are not all successful at identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers are not setting work to sufficiently challenge pupils of all different abilities and to extend pupils' learning.

Leaders have begun the task of ensuring that the school's own assessment information is accurate. For example, leaders have scrutinised early years information in collaboration with external consultants and are satisfied that this is correct. Work to ensure accuracy in other year groups is yet to commence. Staff in the early years have made some progress in improving the learning environment. However, much more is needed. This department is significantly under resourced and despite the best efforts of staff, activities lack appeal. As a result, children's

interest is not sparked, and children regularly flit from one thing to another.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Rightly, leaders have prioritised strengthening the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders have taken decisive action to address previous shortcomings. The entrance to the school has been appropriately adapted so that all visitors are checked before gaining access. Consequently, leaders are reassured that they know who is on site at any given time. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that all safeguarding systems are equally rigorous. For example, record-keeping relating to fire safety is incomplete and pupils have not practised evacuation procedures this year, including the youngest pupils and those who are new to the school.

Parents are positive about the greater rigour with which leaders apply the school's safeguarding procedures. Pupils too talk very positively about the newly established routines at either end of the school day. Pupils are proud that everyone lines up politely, entering the building calmly. Pupils say that as a result there is a noticeable improvement and they don't get bumped or pushed like they used to. They are now matched carefully to appropriate adults as school concludes.

Despite a helpful behaviour consultant visit, leaders have not acted upon advice with sufficient urgency. They have not yet agreed and shared an up-to-date behaviour policy with staff or parents. As a result, staff, including those in temporary roles, are unclear about the school's approach including towards rewards or sanctions. For example, when pupils' behaviour is unsettled, teachers are sometimes unclear on what course of action to take. There is some low-level chatter in most classes. Some pupils say that they can be distracted by others from time to time.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made some headway including establishing detailed behaviour logs of most incidents. However, some inconsistency prevails as not all incidents are recorded meticulously. Furthermore, leaders are not yet looking closely at patterns and trends in order to provide detailed information to governors. Nevertheless, pupils are confident that there is no bullying in the school. They say that adults sort out problems effectively.

Last term, a number of welcome improvements were made to the playground. There is now a range of play equipment that holds appeal for pupils in both key stages 1 and 2. However, leaders and members of the trust have not acted with appropriate urgency to improve the early years outdoor area. External consultants have advised the school that this area is unsafe. The inspector concurs. During the inspection, several children slipped over, losing their footing because of the slick condition of the outdoor area. Older pupils are concerned that their younger peers are not benefiting in the same way that they are.

Although leaders have reviewed the school's approach to marking and feedback, this has had limited impact. Pupils display very low levels of interest in how well they have done in particular tasks. They find it difficult to describe their learning over time. Positive learning behaviours, including persistence to master a new skill, or pride when a new concept is conquered, are rare to see.

Pupils' attendance is gradually declining and is now just below that seen nationally. Absence is too high particularly for vulnerable groups including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders' monitoring and analysis of this aspect is at a very early stage. Actions to improve pupils' attendance are having limited impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' progress is not accelerating. In 2017, pupils' progress at the end of Year 6 was significantly below average and in the bottom 10% of that seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below that seen nationally. Standards remain low.

Current pupils are not making the progress they are capable of. This is because teachers do not use assessment information to plan tasks that are well matched to pupils' starting points. Current information shows that pupils' progress is not speeding up. Too few are catching up in order to overcome previous underachievement. Consequently, many pupils are not working at the standard expected for their age in reading, writing or mathematics.

Pupils are not as productive as they could be. This is because tasks do not meet their needs well enough. Where teachers' expectations are too low, pupils' work is often unfinished. In many classes, standards in the wider curriculum are too low. Pupils say they would like to learn more in subjects like history and geography.

Teaching assistants' skills are underdeveloped and there is no comprehensive programme of interventions in place. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making slower progress than their peers. The school's SENCo is brimming with helpful and well-informed ideas but leaders are yet to act upon the advice they receive. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not receiving the support they require and are underachieving.

Leaders' analysis of performance information has not moved on and remains underdeveloped. In the last few weeks, leaders have begun to get to grips with what is needed. However, information is not yet used well enough to shape school improvement actions.

External support

Officers from Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust acted swiftly to increase available support to the school. As a result, the school now receives regular visits from a whole host of advisers. Although these visits have been useful, advisers' findings are not used well enough to help school leaders identify appropriate priorities. Training and resources, including visits from outside consultants, are not targeted with sufficient precision to where they are needed most.

In the last few weeks, and acting on the advice of the interim academy committee, the trust has more fully grasped the scale of change required. As a result, rightly the level of support has increased and a greater need for urgency is more fully understood.