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Mr Keith Howard
Headteacher
St Dunstan's School
Wells Road
Glastonbury
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Dear Mr Howard

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Dunstan's School

Following my visit with Ofsted Inspectors Mark Henshaw and Judith Mee to your school on 28 and 29 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 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 am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of board of trustees, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the culture of safeguarding in the school by ensuring that:
 - governors are appropriately trained so they check the monitoring of the school's safeguarding procedures effectively to be sure that all pupils are safe
 - staff safeguarding training is up to date and recorded accurately.
- Raise outcomes for pupils by checking that all teachers:
 - pose effective questions that check pupils' learning, develop their understanding and extend their thinking
 - follow the school's policy by providing pupils with effective feedback so that they know how well they are doing and understand how to improve their work
 - give pupils, particularly the most able, work that challenges them
 - develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Raise attendance by:
 - improving systems for monitoring absence
 - working effectively with parents and other agencies to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 28 and 29 November 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership ('the partnership'), senior and middle leaders, support staff, pupils and the chair of the local governing body. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work in lessons and observed pupils at break and lunchtimes.

Context

Since my previous monitoring inspection in July 2017, there have been significant staffing changes, including senior and middle leaders leaving and the appointment of new teachers. You have reorganised the leadership responsibilities that some leaders have. You are currently reducing the number of support staff by means of redundancy procedures. The local governing body has been strengthened further by the appointment of an additional governor and the chair is now established in her role. The partnership has recognised this and has fully delegated responsibilities for governance to the local governing body in line with other schools in the partnership.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher, assistant headteachers and senior leaders from the partnership continue to raise standards at the school. They have analysed the effectiveness of the school's work and, from this, have a secure and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders take swift and proportionate action to ensure that the quality of education continues to improve and this is reflected in the school's development plan. The additional leadership capacity that the partnership has added is bringing about noticeable improvements across the school. Many of the systems that were introduced in the summer term are showing rapid improvement, such as improving the lowest-ability pupils' reading skills. Further changes introduced at the start of this academic year have provided systems and structures, but have yet to have an impact on day-to-day teaching in the classrooms. This is most clearly seen with respect to pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The interim leader from the partnership has developed robust systems for the oversight and management of this area of the school's work, but staff have not yet had the training they need to plan learning that closely meets pupils' needs.

Leaders have strengthened further the culture of safeguarding, and systems for recording and tracking are much improved. Staff training is up to date and staff are showing good understanding of the risks pupils may face. This is seen in the greater number and better quality of referrals that are being made to the safeguarding leaders. There is a need for further refinement to ensure that all systems are fully robust. Leaders with specific responsibility for safeguarding are growing in

confidence. However, they are aware that they must be more challenging of other agencies when they are not satisfied that pupils are receiving the support they need.

Governors have matured into their roles and the interim executive board has now been fully dissolved. A newly appointed governor adds further educational expertise to the group, which strengthens their knowledge and understanding and raises their expectations further. They are well trained and carry out their duties effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve. The most able pupils are being challenged in their thinking more regularly in many subjects. As a result, they are beginning to show aptitude in linking concepts. For example, in English, the most able pupils are able to explore feminism through Shakespeare's texts.

Teachers are increasingly taking into account pupils' starting points and planning learning activities to build on their existing knowledge. This is particularly apparent in mathematics, where new leaders have introduced tried and tested assessment systems to identify pupils' confidence in the various aspects of mathematics. This information is used to influence the planning of whole-class teaching and the interventions that specific pupils need to catch up. However, these developments are new and not yet embedded across the mathematics department.

Pupils are increasingly taking on board the advice that teachers give them. As a result, in most subjects, there is evidence of pupils making corrections and revisiting areas where they have not demonstrated a strong understanding.

While all pupils are making better progress than in the past, this is not as rapid as it needs to be in all subjects. Where teachers' planning of learning does not take into account what pupils already know and understand, pupils' understanding of concepts is not well developed and so progress is slow. This is particularly the case in music and in some science classes. In many subjects, teachers do not give sufficient thought to planning learning for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the previous monitoring inspection, new pastoral leaders have developed their understanding of how well pupils who attend alternative provision are progressing academically and personally. Further refinement of the information gathered is needed so that leaders can integrate fully the information provided with the school's systems.

Behaviour continues to improve and staff are alert to any incidents of misbehaviour. The stark difference between disadvantaged and other pupils has diminished, as

has the gender difference which was seen at the previous monitoring inspection. Where necessary, leaders have had to exclude pupils from school. Almost all of these exclusions are for short periods but the number is higher than that seen typically.

Attendance is improving. A few families continue to take their children on holiday during term time, which has a significant effect on the attendance rates for the school as a whole and on the number of pupils who are regularly absent. While punctuality is also improving, too many pupils are still regularly late for school. The school is working with a specialist consultant to improve attendance and this is having some effect. Further collaborative work with parents is needed to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time.

Outcomes for pupils

The 2017 GCSE results were in line with the national average, although, for a number of reasons, were lower than expected in some areas. Leaders have reflected on this and taken rapid action to ensure better outcomes for pupils this year.

Pupils' reading skills have recently been a subject for specific focus. Leaders have ensured that pupils' time with tutors is now used more effectively to help with their reading. Inspectors observed pupils reading books with an appropriate level of challenge. Those who read to inspectors did so with fluency and showed a good understanding of what they were reading. The work with lower-ability pupils to raise their reading skills has been particularly effective, with all pupils improving their skills at a rapid pace.

Literacy skills across the curriculum continue to improve. However, the application of mathematical skills across subjects is in its infancy.

Leaders' and teachers' work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders are aware of the need to raise academic outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

External support

The directors of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership have invested heavily, and continue to invest, in St Dunstan's School. The additional leadership capacity they have added and the staff they have deployed to the school have had a positive impact.

Senior and middle leaders have made good links with schools within the partnership to support school improvement. Partnership-wide training, for example in literacy, is helping all staff to improve their work in this area. Additionally, some subject

leaders are working with other local schools to develop resources for the new GCSE specifications and to check that their own assessments of pupils' work are accurate.