

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



11 December 2017

Mrs Emma Hardy-Smith  
Pawlett Primary School  
Gaunts Road  
Pawlett  
Bridgwater  
Somerset  
TA6 4SB

Dear Mrs Hardy-Smith

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Pawlett Primary School**

Following my visit with Faye Bertham, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 29–30 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 March 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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017.**

- Urgently secure the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school by:
  - ensuring that supervision of pupils at lunchtimes is adequate
  - insisting that referrals of safeguarding concerns are timely and that record keeping meets requirements
  - ensuring that health and safety requirements are secure and fire safety regulations met.
- Urgently improve leadership and management so that they are consistently good by:
  - ensuring that pupils have equal access to teaching by qualified staff
  - equipping leaders to take effective action to eliminate inadequate teaching
  - measuring pupils' progress from their starting points to eradicate any underachievement quickly
  - insisting that teachers' assessment is accurate and that teachers use it to plan work to meet pupils' needs
  - ensuring that governors robustly hold leaders to account for performance across the whole school and that they know the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment urgently by ensuring that teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics
  - set work that challenges pupils and deepens their understanding so that middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils make good progress in writing
  - consistently and effectively deploy and manage teaching assistants.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by ensuring that teaching is demanding enough so that persistent, low-level disruption and disrespectful behaviour in lessons are eradicated.
- Swiftly improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
  - curriculum requirements are met
  - learning environments are fit for purpose
  - assessment is accurate and used to build on children's knowledge and skills so that they make good progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this

aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 29 November 2017 to 30 November 2017**

### **Evidence**

An inspector met with the two school improvement partners and held two telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority. She also conducted a meeting with the chair of the governing body, a telephone conversation with the Somerset safeguarding officer and a telephone conversation with the primary phase adviser from the Priory Learning Trust.

A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' attainment and progress. Procedures for safeguarding and monitoring attendance and behaviour were evaluated.

Inspectors observed pupils throughout the school day, visited classes and carried out several joint observations with senior leaders. An inspector also carried out a scrutiny of mathematics and writing books with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read. Discussions were held formally and informally with pupils throughout the two days. An inspector attended an assembly.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher then in post has retired and another senior member of staff has left the school. Initially, the local authority secured temporary support from a local leader in education and two local authority officers before securing the support of the Priory Learning Trust in mid-September 2017. One class is currently taught by the interim headteacher and two members of supply staff. All are on a part-time basis. The Priory Learning Trust became involved with the school from mid-September and subsequently secured the current interim headteacher on 30 October 2017.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders and governors have not responded with sufficient urgency to tackle the issues identified at the previous inspection. As a result, they are not taking effective action towards the removal of the special measures designation. The significant number of part-time leaders since March 2017 and the poor handover between school leaders have led to drift and delay to school improvement.

Leaders needed to prioritise making the school safe. Governors and senior leaders have been successful in improving the weakest aspects of safeguarding identified in the previous inspection. For example, the school's single central record is now in place and fire safety regulations are met. Leaders have invested in more staff to supervise pupils at lunchtimes so that pupils are safe. Both the previous interim headteacher and the current headteacher have provided staff with effective training

to keep pupils safe. There is evidence of careful record-keeping since October. However, leaders recognise that there are gaps in documentation and staff understanding around issues such as risk assessment for school trips. This leaves pupils vulnerable to risk of harm.

The previous inspection report stated that there should be an external review of governance. This has not happened. The local authority sought to strengthen the governing body and appointed an experienced interim chair of governors. However, while committed to the school, governors are few in number and inexperienced, so they lack sufficient capacity to bring about many of the urgent changes needed in the school. The governing body has not discharged its duties to ensure that additional funds such as the pupil premium are appropriately allocated.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose. Despite redrafts by consecutive school leaders and the fact that all the areas requiring improvement are noted, references to the proposed impact on pupils' progress and attainment are scarce. The plan's success criteria are vague. Timescales are imprecise. Consequently, the plan does not serve as an effective tool for governors to hold senior leaders robustly to account and prevent the momentum of improvement from stalling.

Leaders have been slow to implement systems to measure pupils' progress to eradicate underachievement. In the last four weeks, the headteacher has begun to assess the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils in the key stage 2 class. However, leaders have not begun to deal with inaccuracies of teachers' assessments in the key stage 1 and early years class. This frustrates parents who are otherwise pleased with the improvements in the culture of the school since the current interim headteacher's appointment. In contrast, new leaders' decisive action to improve teaching and behaviour is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress in the key stage 2 class.

The appointment of a temporary and part-time leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been effective in identifying pupils' barriers to learning. However, the leader has identified that until recently, teachers have not been taking responsibility to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and this remains the case in the key stage 1 and early years class.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to swiftly improve provision in the early years. There have been some encouraging steps to success. For example, indoor and outdoor environments are now safe and well organised so that children can access resources for themselves. Interim leaders have provided the teacher with guidance around curriculum expectations but have failed to ensure that assessments of children's skills, knowledge and understanding are accurate. Since their involvement in mid-September, leaders from the Priory Learning Trust have been providing teaching staff with coaching and feedback. Currently there are no signs of improvement.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching remains a serious concern. In the key stage 2 class, there is a heavy reliance on the effective teaching of the current interim headteacher. The temporary nature of the teaching staff and the lack of clarity linked to their roles and responsibilities hamper the progress of change. In the other class, the individual coaching has yet to result in improved standards. Accurate teacher assessment is not evident. Work set does not challenge pupils or deepen their understanding. Consequently, pupils' progress slows too much.

The previous inspection outcomes identified a need for teachers to effectively deploy and manage teaching assistants. Leaders have had some success with this aspect of improvement. Relationships between pupils and adults are mainly positive. Teaching assistants are well-meaning and value the support and guidance from the recent leadership. Where they are given appropriate guidance, they are providing effective support for pupils. However, this is not yet a consistent feature of the school's work.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The implementation of the school's new behaviour policy has started to have a positive impact. Teachers' expectations have risen. Consequently, incidents of low-level disruption and 'off-task' behaviour have reduced. Pupils say that they are finding it easier to concentrate. However, senior leaders identify the impact of a legacy of weak teaching and low expectations. They are working effectively to tackle pupils' lack of resilience when faced with activities which make them think hard.

Pupils generally move around the school safely. A number of pupils were polite and were observed holding doors open for adults. The interim headteacher is working effectively to improve behaviour. In addition, the introduction of a pupils' parliament has introduced pupils to the principles of democracy.

Leaders have not done enough to tackle pupils' poor attendance, which is worse now than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Leaders have not carried out an accurate analysis of pupils' attendance and governors are not aware of the extent of the problem. Pupils' overall attendance is below the national average and there are too many pupils who have a lot of time off school. Leaders have identified that holidays in term time account for a number of absences. However, they have yet to implement an effective policy to raise parents' awareness of the impact of pupils' poor attendance.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Recently published information on the outcomes of the assessments taken at the end of every key stage in the school shows that standards are poor. Local authority

officers worked in the school during the statutory assessment period last May. They concluded that there was too little evidence of writing to make any secure judgement. This further highlights the inadequate achievement noted at the time of the previous inspection.

The current attainment of pupils in most year groups is low in reading, writing and mathematics. There are encouraging signs over the last four weeks in key stage 2. Work in books shows some rapid gains in progress for pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, pupils are not making enough progress to catch up. Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are universally weak in every year group. Leaders have identified that pupils' progress over time is poor because they are not given enough challenge or support in lessons, particularly in the key stage 1 and early years class. In some lessons, pupils make some small steps of improvement when they are working with an adult. However, as soon as pupils are left on their own to complete a task, they quickly become distracted and no further progress is made.

Children in the early years foundation stage are not making enough progress because the activities they are provided with fail to challenge or inspire them. Outcomes are weak because children do not receive precise teaching which is firmly rooted in strong early years practice. They continue to fail to thrive as learners.

### **External support**

The local authority acted quickly after the previous inspection to instigate short-term, part-time support from a local leader in education. Additional support in the form of two local authority officers acted as a springboard for change. However, the chain of part-time and temporary support with no effective handover has slowed down the school's development journey. Successively poor communication has been a significant barrier to school improvement. For example, successive leaders have provided the same support and suite of professional development for teaching. Neither have been effective.

The local authority has not made regular checks on the school's progress towards tackling the areas for improvement. Consequently, they have not had a true picture of the weaknesses in governance that exist. Governors failed to follow the expectations set out in the previous inspection plan to undertake a review of governance. Weak governance and the absence of challenge have stalled the school's progress.

The recently commissioned support from the Priory Trust has been successful in securing a full-time headteacher. This has been welcomed by the parent body. However, it is too soon to see any further impact of the work of the trust.