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Mrs Claire Macfie
Headteacher
Wilberforce Primary
Beethoven Street
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Dear Mrs Macfie

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wilberforce Primary

Following my visit with Gill Bal and Sahreen Siddiqui, Ofsted Inspectors, to the school on 11–12 December 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 school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the director of United Learning, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Westminster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance should set a clear vision for the school's future that is communicated to and shared by leaders, members of staff, parents and pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the principal and senior leaders work together to develop a strong team ethos, supporting middle leaders to develop their knowledge and experience so that they can be held accountable for areas of the school's work.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and therefore pupils' outcomes, by:
 - developing a culture of high expectations which is clearly understood by adults and pupils
 - ensuring that leaders check the quality of teaching and take action to improve it
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information to precisely plan activities that will secure faster progress for groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are set challenging activities which enable them to reach their full potential.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils both in and out of lessons by:
 - ensuring that a clear behaviour policy is in place, understood by pupils and consistently applied
 - reducing the number of serious behaviour incidents
 - eliminating low-level disruption in lessons by setting up and embedding routines that support pupils' better behaviour.
- Improve the attendance of pupils and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 11–12 December 2017

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the three phase leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the director of United Learning and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the local governing body. The school's evaluation and school improvement documents were reviewed, together with documents relating to safeguarding and to meetings of the trust and governing body.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They scrutinised a large sample of pupils' books and reviewed the school's information about the progress that current pupils in the school are making. Inspectors talked to pupils in classrooms, in the playground and as they moved around the school. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents about their views of the school. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to make a valid analysis.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, a new senior leadership team has been established consisting of the headteacher, the key stages 1 and 2 phase leaders and the early years foundation stage leader. An experienced part-time SENCo has been appointed. Leaders continue to work with United Learning and with the local authority to improve the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The formidable senior leadership team has demonstrated good capacity to bring about further improvement to the school. The headteacher's leadership is assured, calm and supportive, but also firm. As a result, senior leaders share high expectations and a passionate belief in the school's future. They are beginning to realise their vision of a good school on a journey towards outstanding. They have taken actions to ensure that the school has made good progress with the areas for improvement identified by the 2016 inspection. Standards are rising and pupils' progress is improving. Leaders' sharp evaluation of the school's work acknowledges that there is still more to do to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good, and that pupils in all year groups make consistently strong progress. They have identified the right priorities and are taking the right action to bring about the necessary improvements. In particular, leaders are precisely targeting their support to eliminate weaker teaching and this is having a good impact.

The governing body continues to have a positive impact on school improvement. The chair of the governing body has facilitated networks, partnerships and links with good or outstanding schools which have greatly benefited staff and pupils at

Wilberforce school. The governing body continues to strengthen its skill set through recruitment of new governors. For example, a governor has been recruited with special educational needs (SEN) expertise, who will link with the SENCo to support and challenge this aspect of the school's work.

The United Learning group has maintained a good balance of challenge and support for the school. The director of the trust's work as a 'critical friend' has helped to develop leaders' skills and the headteacher to thrive in her role. The director is reflective and flexible in approach, and takes determined action on the basis of advice and feedback.

The new phase leaders have had a marked impact on provision. In the early years foundation stage this has very swiftly secured improvements to the learning environment, to the quality of teaching and, crucially, to the accurate tracking of children's progress from their starting points. In key stages 1 and 2, leaders have provided good support and feedback to help teachers improve their practice. Other leaders with responsibility for specific subjects have worked well with senior leaders to ensure that the school provides an interesting, broad curriculum.

Leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance has been sustained since the previous visit. Safeguarding is effective.

Most of the parents who spoke with inspectors are very positive about the school's work. Records show that the headteacher deals swiftly and effectively with any issues raised by parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Despite clear signs of improvement and much good teaching, there is still a degree of variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally, teachers are not yet fully confident in challenging the most able pupils in mathematics. Consequently, raising the quality of teaching remains a priority for the school.

Teachers continue to be positive and proud to work at the school and are keen to improve their skills. For example, they have responded well to the school's drive to challenge the most able pupils in English by deploying new strategies. These are already demonstrating impact, with evidence that most-able pupils across the school are making very good progress in reading and writing. Teachers are using the beautiful new fiction and non-fiction libraries to enthuse pupils about reading. Teachers are also using the training they have received well to make the most of the new reading resources in classrooms. They are using high-quality literature and interesting themes successfully to excite and engage children. Excellent writing, art and design work can be seen around the school as a result of this work. Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving and their books indicate that these pupils are making steady progress from their various starting

points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons was excellent. They also behaved well during playtimes, despite the poor weather conditions. Any poor or challenging behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff and leaders. The school's documents confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are much reduced.

The school's behaviour policy is well established. Pupils are well behaved and happy at Wilberforce. Their attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. They feel safe and are proud of their school.

Pupils are a delight to meet and talk to. They take pride in their achievements. They know that staff want them to achieve well and they work hard to rise to the challenge.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes have improved significantly since the school was judged to require special measures. The progress and attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2, including those of disadvantaged pupils, improved in 2017. Year 1 pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above that found nationally.

Pupils' books show that their progress is improving in reading, mathematics and particularly in writing. However, reflecting variability in the quality of teaching, progress is slower in some year groups than others. Overall, therefore, outcomes are not yet good.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making steady progress. Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their classmates in most year groups. The most able pupils are making more sustained progress than in the past, particularly in reading and writing.

External support

School leaders have embraced the network of local authority schools and have welcomed support from local authority advisers. The local authority's stated position, that 'every child is a Westminster child', has benefited the school and its pupils greatly. The school has been very well supported by United Learning.