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8 March 2018

Miss Wendy Robinson  
Archbishop Courtenay Primary School  
Eccleston Road  
Tovil  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 6QN

Dear Miss Robinson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Archbishop Courtenay Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 February 2018, 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 June 2017.

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

the trust's statement of action is fit for purpose

the school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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 board of trustees, and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that the school follows its own procedures when maintaining a single central record and eradicates inconsistencies
  - clarifying the lines of accountability and embedding robust and reliable central record-keeping of the actions taken to support vulnerable pupils
  - ensuring that the local governing body accurately oversees that all of the school's policies and procedures meet requirements
  - making sure that all staff are clear on safeguarding procedures
  - improving evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and using this to underpin sustained improvements to teaching and learning
  - ensuring that the wider curriculum is broad and balanced, meets pupils' needs and better prepares them for secondary school.
- Improve the rates of attendance for all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they at least match national averages.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all groups of pupils make strong progress over time, through leaders:
  - more thoroughly checking the quality of pupils' work across the curriculum and holding teachers to account for the progress they make
  - facilitating training to support key stage 2 teachers to improve their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science
  - supporting all teachers to develop their questioning and feedback to pupils in line with the best examples seen in the school
  - ensuring that teaching assistants have access to planning and information enabling them to more effectively support pupils.
- Continue to improve outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing in key stage 1 and ensure that rapid improvements are made to these areas in key stage 2 by:
  - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning
  - improving teachers' planning and organisation of lessons so that they take into account the needs of all pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively to check

the progress that pupils make from their starting points and give them feedback about how to improve their work.

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

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

Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 February 2018**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection I met with senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and the vice chair of the local governing body. I held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner and reviewed her notes of visits. I visited every classroom with senior leaders and evaluated work in pupils' books. I reviewed the school's assessment information for current pupils. I spoke with pupils at lunchtime and around the school. I spoke with a small number of parents and considered the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I met a group of teachers, almost all teaching assistants and spoke to staff around the school. I reviewed the single central record of staff recruitment checks, met the designated staff with a responsibility for safeguarding and evaluated a wide range of their records. I evaluated leaders' information regarding pupils' attendance and the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, two teachers have joined key stage 2. The trust had appointed a newly qualified teacher before the last inspection. A small number of teaching assistants have left the school and have been replaced.

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

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in their school, including where teaching is effective and where it is not. As a result, leaders' plans to further improve the school are appropriate.

Leaders have clear and detailed plans to improve the knowledge and skills of individual teachers. Leaders are beginning to see some improvements but they are checking diligently to ensure that these are sustained.

Teaching staff recognise that leaders have raised the bar. Teachers welcome the stability and clarity that senior leaders bring to the school. They also value the due regard that leaders have for their well-being. Consequently, leaders have a team of committed staff who are determined to improve pupils' outcomes. The work to support newly qualified teachers is effective.

Leaders at all levels, including the trust and the local governing body, now have a detailed and accurate picture of current pupils' learning. The deputy headteacher has worked swiftly with the trust and the staff to ensure that performance information, including regarding pupils' starting points, is accurate and understood by staff. However, it is too early for this information to be used effectively to evaluate progress over time.

A review of governance was undertaken swiftly after the last inspection. As a result,

the local governing board has developed and implemented a clear improvement plan and strengthened its work. Governors now have the knowledge and insight to ask highly pertinent questions of leaders. The learning and development committee is becoming more effective in holding leaders to account. However, its members, like all leaders, have only recently received accurate and meaningful information about pupils' progress.

The trust knows what the school does well and what it does not. The school improvement partner helps to test and validate leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning. Leaders and the local governing body value the incisive and detailed reports they receive.

The curriculum is now broad and balanced. Leaders have improved staff's subject knowledge. They deliberately chose to design their curriculum to be confident that staff had a clearer understanding about what knowledge, skills and understanding pupils in their school would develop over time. Pupils talk positively about the topics they are learning about.

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have created a strong culture that prioritises the safety and well-being of pupils. Leaders at all levels have a very clear understanding of the statutory guidance that ensures safe staff recruitment. The single central record of recruitment checks meets requirements.

Staff, including teaching assistants, have unerring clarity about the role they play in keeping pupils safe. They know the signs to look and listen for regarding pupils' safety and well-being. Staff understand the importance of swift and accurate recording of any such concern. Leaders work well with other agencies, such as social care. They make fulsome referrals when they feel pupils are not safe and keep detailed records of all communications with families and other agencies.

Pupils feel safe. Staff feel pupils are safe and almost all parents feel that their children are well cared for. However, some parents are not always satisfied with leaders' responses regarding their concerns. Leaders recognise they could do even more to ensure that the clear, concise and compliant complaints policy on the school's website is readily available to those who may wish to access it.

A pupil premium review has not been undertaken. This was a conscious, strategic decision. Leaders wanted to ensure that they had meaningful assessment information about all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, before reviewing how they plan to spend additional government funding. Leaders also recognised that some very basic work needed to be undertaken. For example, ensuring all staff are clear about which pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. Consequently, this element of the school's work remains weak. Leaders at all levels know that disadvantaged pupils are not achieving well enough. However, plans to spend additional funding are underdeveloped.

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

The quality of assessment is improving. Leaders and staff now have a clear understanding about pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This is highly important in key stage 2 because some pupils are significantly behind, as a result of weak teaching over time.

Some teachers are skilled at quickly identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, they adapt what they were planning to teach pupils and make sure that they learn the basic skills.

Leaders have developed a range of strategies to improve reading standards. Staff value the training and professional development opportunities they are given, including visiting other successful schools within the trust. Assessment information suggests that this work is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Leaders have introduced a wide range of teaching 'non-negotiables' to make sure that there is a consistent approach to structuring teaching and learning. Leaders have also identified where staff now need to develop greater confidence.

Teaching assistants are highly committed to the school. Leaders have insisted that teachers make what is being taught, and why, much clearer for them so they know their role in the lesson. Teaching assistants welcome this and appreciate receiving training to extend their knowledge and skills. For example, there is a strong team which is well-trained to teach phonics. However, there are fewer teaching assistants in key stage 1 who have expertise in working with pupils new to English.

Pupils, particularly the oldest in the school, are insistent that teaching is improving. They think learning is more fun and they value the extra help they get when they do not quite understand something. They are taking greater pride in their work and enjoy the home learning challenges.

Writing standards in key stage 2 are low. There is a highly inconsistent approach to developing pupils' spelling, particularly for those who are working well below the expected standard.

As a result of additional training, teachers do have a better understanding about what pupils should have learned before joining their class and what they will be taught in subsequent years. However, it is too soon to see whether this is improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. Pupils say that behaviour has got better because teaching is more interesting. Many younger pupils skip and run into school because it is a happy, caring and safe place to learn. Staff are very skilled at supporting vulnerable pupils and those who need additional

support to settle into school life.

Pupils are coming to school more often. The very high proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is beginning to decline. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are coming to school more regularly.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Leaders and staff now have accurate and meaningful assessment information. Work in pupils' books suggests that they are beginning to make better progress in science, history and geography. This is because the curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned.

Pupils are beginning to make better progress in their reading.

Standards in key stage 2 are low because the quality of teaching over time has not been good enough. The oldest pupils are currently making stronger progress in key stage 2.

Current pupils are making inconsistent progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the early years and key stage 1. In some year groups disadvantaged pupils are attaining better than their peers. Leaders are not complacent because in these year groups all pupils are not achieving well enough.

Leaders can now see clearly that those pupils in key stage 1 and 2 with the lowest starting points are not catching up quickly enough.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress.