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Mrs Rachael Allen
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Allen

Special measures monitoring inspection of Henry Hinde Junior School

Following my visit with Chris Ogden, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 6–7 March 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 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.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plans, including subject plans, are fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive

officer (CEO) for NET Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Strengthen leadership and governance to ensure that:
 - there is increased capacity at senior and middle leadership level to tackle weaknesses in the school and challenge a culture of low expectations
 - governors challenge leaders over pupils' outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils, and check the impact of pupil premium funding
 - pay awards for teachers are linked to the effectiveness of their work
 - governors check that the school is fulfilling its statutory duties for safeguarding and for information it publishes on the website
 - all statutory arrangements for special educational needs (SEN) are met to ensure that pupils have their needs accurately identified, met and reviewed
 - the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced so that pupils have a greater understanding of diversity in modern Britain and the wider world.
- Improve outcomes for pupils rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations for all pupils, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - plan all learning based on accurate assessments so that there is a consistently high rate of challenge for different groups of pupils
 - deploy additional adults effectively to enable pupils at risk of falling behind to make accelerated progress.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare by ensuring that:
 - misbehaviour by individuals does not disrupt the learning of others
 - pupils' behaviour in the dining hall area is of a high standard and noise levels are reduced
 - pupils' presentation of written work is of a high quality.

An external review of governance and an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 6–7 March 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed parts of lessons, some of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, assessment information and samples of pupils' work in books. Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, the consultant responsible for managing SEN and two members of the middle leadership team. The lead inspector met a group of pupils to hear them read and to discuss their views about their work and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the CEO of NET Academies Trust ('the trust'). Staff vetting and safeguarding procedures were examined, and the lead inspector met with senior leaders, who are the designated safeguarding leads, and the family support worker. Inspectors spoke with some parents and carers at the start and end of each inspection day.

The foci for this monitoring inspection were: to determine whether amendments to the trust's statement of action make it fit for purpose; to see whether leaders' action plans are suitable and are being implemented effectively; the extent to which the school is addressing the three main areas for improvement reported at the time of the previous inspection; the measures adopted by the trust, leaders and governors to improve governance; and the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement.

Context

There have been significant changes to the composition of the governing body since the previous monitoring inspection in September 2017. A new chair of governors replaced the previous chair and the trust has appointed more governors. At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, the governing body was responsible for two schools in the trust. It is now only responsible for overseeing the work of Henry Hinde Junior School. There are three permanent vacancies for class teacher posts. Three classes are being taught by temporary teachers. A new chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust was appointed in December 2017 to replace the previous interim CEO.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

After the slow start reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, leaders are now building capacity for more improvement. Leadership and governance are improving. The headteacher and assistant headteacher are ambitious. They are striving to ensure that all teaching and learning activities are of good or better quality. There is still much more work to do to realise these ambitions, but leaders are starting to address many of the weaknesses reported

previously.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the headteacher has clarified and improved the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. In addition, the appointment of a temporary consultant who has oversight of SEN provision is already having an impact. Planning and training for staff who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are increasingly helping to improve the quality of interventions planned for pupils who have additional learning needs or who have behavioural difficulties. Learning support assistants are more effective than previously in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities as well as in their more general role supporting class teachers.

Teachers responsible for managing a subject or phase of the school are focusing more on improving pupil outcomes. To guide these improvements, leaders have adapted their action plans. There are now sharper priorities and clear measures of success in the school's subject action plans and the trust's statement of action. Accurate evaluations of the quality of teaching carried out by the headteacher and assistant headteacher are reducing the amount of weak or inadequate teaching. Overall, the measures adopted and actions taken by the trust, governors and school leaders are laying more secure foundations than previously for sustained improvement.

Regular reviews of pupils' progress are now being carried out more effectively and assessment is well managed by the assistant headteacher. Teachers have greater responsibility than previously for monitoring pupils' performance. The performance of teachers and support staff is more clearly linked to pupil outcomes and attainment targets. However, leaders recognise that there are too many pupils underachieving and who have a lot of ground still to catch up. The differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others who are not disadvantaged are steadily closing, but gaps are still too wide in most classes.

Governors and senior leaders are trying their best to recruit more permanent staff. The measures adopted so far to reduce weak teaching are helping, but there is still a great deal to do to make sure that, in all classes, the teaching is consistently effective. Increasingly stable staffing, and the headteacher's determination to deploy teachers and support staff more effectively, are showing signs of improvement to pupils' attainment and progress. Nonetheless, the headteacher and trust recognise that there are some significant weaknesses in teaching that still need to be addressed. As a result, pupils' progress across classes and years groups remains uneven.

The last monitoring inspection pointed out some significant weaknesses to governance. Governors have since acted on this and responded more effectively to the recommendations of an external review carried in March 2017. Actions taken in response to the review show a significant improvement. In addition, the trust has reorganised the governing body to address some key weaknesses reported

previously. Governors no longer have oversight of two schools as a 'cluster governing body'. The adoption of a more conventional role to manage one school is proving to be more effective because the governing body can focus more now on Henry Hinde Junior School. Additional governors have been appointed. This has added a broader range of skills and expertise to the governing body.

Senior leaders have ambitious plans to expand the curriculum to include more outdoor learning, sport and a broader range of reading and writing activities. There are some good examples in pupils' workbooks, class displays and corridors of an interesting range of topics and projects already being studied. These interest and excite pupils who, for example, told inspectors that they enjoy learning about interesting places and landmarks in Paris, such as the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower. Pupils have enjoyed studying and writing about the events leading up to the Second World War, and many younger pupils thoroughly enjoyed studying facts about the Stone Age.

The training and professional development of leaders and staff are improving. Teachers and support staff are increasingly seeing and sharing best practice with other schools in the local cluster. Governors are planning more governor training in cooperation with the local authority and other local schools and are planning to utilise the expertise of a national leader of governance.

The school's single central record, staff vetting and safe recruitment policies and practices continue to comply with statutory requirements. Safeguarding remains effective and there is a vigilant culture of safeguarding and child protection throughout the school. The work being carried out with vulnerable families by leaders and the school's family support worker also help to maintain good attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers and support staff have responded to address some of the core weaknesses highlighted at the time of the previous inspection. There are some green shoots of improvement but still some way to go to ensure consistently good teaching and learning in all classes. The learning observed in lessons, assessments of the rate of pupils' progress and the work in books show improvement. However, the work planned for pupils in many lessons does not sufficiently challenge or extend their learning.

The headteacher has put in place some interim measures to address the permanent staff shortage. For example, two of the middle leaders who have responsibility for managing writing and mathematics share their expertise with staff and teach in other classes to boost pupils' progress. This is working well and assessments show that pupils are making more rapid progress than previously. The headteacher and assistant headteacher also teach more than previously and share their expertise. The school is utilising the expertise of the most effective teachers. As a result, there

are now more examples of good practice in lessons than were seen at the time of the previous monitoring inspection.

The assistant headteacher has established an accurate assessment system that enables leaders, governors and staff to monitor the progress and performance of all pupils. At the time of the previous monitoring inspection in September 2017, accurate assessments of pupil outcomes had just been introduced. Since then, leaders have built on this further and improved the way they track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments are now more accurate than previously, and there has been an uplift in pupils' attainment in most classes, particularly in Years 3 and 6. Teachers are increasingly using assessment as a tool to monitor the progress of different groups. Disadvantaged pupils, for example, are clearly being monitored so that leaders and staff can compare the progress of these pupils with others who are not disadvantaged.

Teachers are planning more activities and tasks for pupils based on their knowledge of each child's progress. However, there are still too many occasions during lessons when pupils mark time because they do not have enough to do. There are also instances when the most capable pupils complete work early because they are not being challenged from the start. Teachers are still preventing pupils from producing enough work by interrupting or engaging the class in too much conversation, which slows progress.

Despite these weaknesses, there are examples of good practice. Pupils are making better progress now in mathematics than previously because teachers are planning more open-ended reasoning and problem-solving tasks. These engage and motivate pupils and challenge them to apply their knowledge of numbers to a range of tasks. However, pupils are hampered or make less progress if they do not complete tasks or work on problems that are too easy. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are improving because they are increasingly practising how best to form letters and write in a fluent and neat style. However, spelling remains a weakness as pupils make too many repeated and unnecessary spelling errors. Attainment in reading is improving because pupils are having more opportunities to read independently, but the most capable readers are not reading widely or often enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times continues to improve. Despite staff changes, pupils explained how much they enjoy their lessons and new topics. 'I am expected to listen and work hard, and the work about the Stone Age is really exciting,' stated one pupil. Another shared her experiences in lessons and confirmed, 'We help each other when writing and I am getting better at writing stories.' In most of the lessons observed, pupils were busy and productive, but there remain too many instances when pupils stray off task or chat and waste time because they are not expected to do enough.

Pupils happily engage in conversations with others when they are on task. For example, in a Year 6 class, they discussed how best to structure and edit a letter to a character in a story they have been studying. Leaders and teachers are increasingly providing lessons that hold pupils' interests and enthusiasm, but there is still more to do to ensure that the tasks they plan for pupils extend their learning and motivate them to work hard for more sustained periods of time. In the most effective lessons, tasks are usually varied and stimulating, engaging pupils' interest and resulting in more purposeful learning behaviour. As a result, there is much less disruptive or off-task behaviour in lessons now compared with at the previous monitoring inspection.

During a meeting with a group of older pupils in key stage 2, it was clear that pupils felt that they are learning more than previously. The groups that spoke with an inspector represented pupils across the ability range. They could all describe in some detail the characters in stories they are reading and offer opinions about different books. This is a significant improvement since the last monitoring inspection, although pupils across the school should be reading more often and experiencing more challenging books and a range of authors and genres.

Pupils are safe and secure and form friendships easily. They are polite and courteous to their classmates and adults. Attendance rates compare well with national figures, and persistent absence is reducing because of the effective work carried out by leaders and the family support worker. Pupils are usually punctual and ready for school. Nearly all the parents spoken to during the two days of this inspection are pleased with their children's education and the way their children are looked after and cared for by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Teaching is improving and is starting to have an impact on raising standards. Nonetheless, standards are still too low in Years 4 and 5 particularly. Pupils are on course to make more rapid progress than previously so are starting to catch up on significant lost ground, but there is still a great deal more to do to sustain improvements.

As reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, in 2017, Year 6 national test results showed that the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. At that time, pupils in Year 6 made inadequate progress in relation to their starting points when they first joined Year 3. The latest assessments up to the middle of this term show an uplift, particularly in mathematics in Year 6. However, pupils still have a lot of ground to catch up in reading and to a lesser extent in writing. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others who are not disadvantaged is starting to close, but in some classes this is not rapid enough.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are doing better now than previously. This is a significant improvement since the inspection in November 2016 that placed the school into special measures. There are now more focused and effective interventions planned for pupils who have learning or behavioural difficulties. This is also an improvement since the previous monitoring inspection in September 2017. Learning support assistants are better deployed to support pupils in classes and when working with small groups. As a result, pupils who fall short of age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics are doing better now than previously.

The quality of pupils' handwriting is improving but spelling remains a relative weakness across the school. As at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, the proportion of the most able pupils exceeding age-related standards remains too low in most classes. However, the targeted support for pupils who have the potential to reach age-related standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, is working, as these pupils are making more rapid progress than previously. The school is making significant inroads into improving learning in mathematics. Pupils' progress in Year 6 is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. In Years 3 to 5, pupils are making better progress than previously in mathematics, but the pace of improvement is patchy because of inconsistencies that remain in the quality of teaching across classes.

External support

There is increasingly good school-to-school support, staff training and shared practice across the local cluster of schools and more widely with other schools beyond the immediate locality. The trust's new CEO is planning to build on these arrangements working across the cluster through more school-to-school support for leaders and governors. The involvement of the local cluster of schools includes important and effective sharing of best practice and the joint moderation of pupils' work to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate.

Senior leaders, governors and the trust have addressed the weaknesses in improvement planning reported last time and have ensured that the statement of action is now fit for purpose. Leaders have also taken appropriate steps to improve subject action plans, which are also now fit for purpose. Improvement plans now have clear milestones and measures of success that help leaders, governors and the trust to gauge the impact of the school's actions on improvement towards the removal from special measures.