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20 April 2018

Headteacher  
Mrs Deakin  
Tameside Primary School  
Price Road  
Wednesbury  
West Midlands  
WS10 0EZ

Dear Mrs Deakin

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

Following my visit with Paul Whitcombe, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 20–21 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 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 July 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 Sandwell. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Meekin

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
  - improve their knowledge of subjects so they can set learning targets for pupils that are linked to the age-related expectations of the curriculum
  - use information from assessments to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils
  - raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve but especially the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - insist that pupils work to the best of their ability, including presenting their work neatly
  - improve the teaching of phonics so that pupils' reading, spelling and writing skills improve more rapidly
  - check on pupils' learning in lessons by asking them to explain their thinking, especially in mathematics
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to read, write at length and use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects
  - learn through observation of the qualities of good teaching which are evident in Year 6
  - effectively support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities including by the efficient deployment of support staff
  - help pupils to not be over-dependent on support staff
  - take steps to improve pupils' behaviour in lessons.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
  - ensuring that safeguarding systems are checked effectively and all records of incidents are accurately recorded
  - acting on the recommendations of the local authority and the national leader of education
  - implementing the school development plan so that leaders can gauge the impact of their actions on improving pupils' achievement and teachers' performance
  - developing a suitable leadership structure to support rapid school improvement
  - strengthening the management and oversight of special educational needs

provision to ensure that more is expected of these pupils academically and to improve their attendance

- improving communication between the special educational needs coordinator, the school's safeguarding team and parents
  - providing a curriculum that includes opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of British values
  - ensuring that governors hold leaders to account for following pertinent recommendations to improve the school
  - improving relationships with parents and restoring their faith in the school
  - improving the effectiveness and consistency of playground supervision to reduce the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour
  - developing the website so that it is compliant with statutory requirements.
- Improve early years provision by ensuring that teachers plan activities that develop and improve children's skills, and making sure that adults have higher expectations of what the children can achieve to prepare them for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
  - An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
  - An external evaluation of the pupil premium spending should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 20 March 2018 to 21 March 2018**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the two deputy headteachers. Other meetings were held with three governors, including the chair, and two representatives from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to other leaders and staff, as well as speaking to pupils informally and formally. Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects across the whole school. During these observations, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. Pupils' behaviour was observed at social times, in lessons and as they moved around the school site.

Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's improvement plan, and records that evaluate the quality of teaching. Leaders shared the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. The lead inspector looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. A new deputy headteacher with responsibility for early years and key stage 1 was appointed in September 2017. The early years leader is on secondment at another school and a temporary early years leader is in post. One of the assistant headteachers now has responsibility for monitoring the use and impact of pupil premium and sport premium. Another assistant headteacher now has responsibility for teaching and learning across the school. Three permanent teachers have left the school and there are five classrooms with long-term supply teachers. A new chair of governors, who was previously a member of the governing body, has been appointed, as well as four new governors, including the vice-chair.

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

A lack of clear direction and urgency has led to insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher and governors have not ensured that several key statutory processes are in place. Consequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are extremely fragile.

The quality of support and guidance for senior leaders is weak. Performance management arrangements do not meet statutory requirements. Some senior leaders have not been subject to performance management for several years. A new deputy headteacher, with oversight of the early years and key stage 1, has added additional capacity to the leadership of the school. However, there has been insufficient consideration to the overall leadership structure. Some senior leaders

have not been informed of who they are line managing. There are three senior leaders based in key stage 2 and one with responsibility across the early years and key stage 1. This creates an imbalance in leadership capacity across the school. Despite these issues, some senior leaders are having a positive impact. However, improvements that they make are fragile because of the lack of an overall coherent strategy to improve the quality of education in the school.

The headteacher and governors have not acted upon advice regarding the use of the pupil premium and sport premium. The previous inspection highlighted that statutory information in relation to this funding is not on the website. This was also pointed out by the local authority and through the pupil premium and governance reviews. There have been no pupil premium or sport premium plans or analyses of impact for several years. Therefore, leaders and governors cannot demonstrate how these significant amounts of funding provide value for money. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment still remains very low. The assistant headteacher who took on responsibility for monitoring the use and impact of these funding streams in September 2017 has instigated a pupil premium review and has put in place some successful interventions. For example, a mathematics booster programme in Year 6 has helped more pupils to reach the expected standard for their age. However, insufficient guidance and support have prevented the leader from carrying out the role effectively. A recent meeting with the chair of governors proved useful and enabled the leader to begin discussions at a more senior level.

The school improvement plan has taken too long to finalise. At a meeting in February 2018, the local authority highlighted that leaders had not completed or shared a final school improvement plan. The version of the improvement plan shared during this monitoring inspection is not fit for purpose. Actions included in the plan have not been effectively evaluated for impact as the year has progressed and the leaders' monitoring cycle does not link coherently to priorities in the plan. The plan does not clearly identify the most important priorities for the school or how the impact or success of actions will be measured. Not all leaders know their precise role in relation to the priorities and actions identified in the plan, and as a result have not been given sufficiently clear and purposeful direction.

Weaker teaching in the school is not being addressed with sufficient urgency. Some teachers are not receiving the individualised guidance and training that they need. The lack of organised strategy means that weaker teaching is not identified promptly enough and relevant individualised support is not put in place quickly enough to bring about improvement. With the right direction and guidance, there are several leaders in school who are capable of providing individualised support for weaker teaching.

Several senior and middle leaders are showing promise in their roles. The two deputy headteachers have worked hard with other leaders to ensure that there are more consistent approaches to teaching and learning in classrooms. For example, the accuracy of teachers' assessments and the way the pupils' progress is analysed

is far more effective. There has been an intentional and successful move to ensure that teachers have more ownership of this analysis. The English and mathematics leaders have also worked with senior leaders to bring greater consistency to teaching. Their improvement plans are evaluated well for impact.

Governors have not taken sufficiently rigorous actions since the previous inspection. They have not responded to advice about the website not meeting statutory requirements. Nor have they held the headteacher to account for some of the weaknesses apparent in the school. Despite this, the new chair and vice-chair demonstrate the skills to move the school forward. There has been a period of transition since the previous inspection. In the autumn term, several new governors were appointed, including the chair and vice-chair. A review of governance was carried out in January 2018 and governors have started to respond to some of the recommendations. Minutes of governing body meetings and of governors' visits to the school show that governors now provide more effective challenge in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, governors need to urgently raise the level of challenge even further, so that key statutory processes, such as performance management and the use of pupil premium funding, are carried out effectively.

The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in improving communication about safeguarding. She has organised a regular strategy meeting between the key stage 1 deputy headteacher, designated safeguarding lead, the family support worker and the learning mentor. This team of staff work highly productively together to ensure that pupils are kept safe and that families receive the support that they need. The designated safeguarding lead is meticulous in her work. The online system for recording concerns is used well and incidents are thoroughly followed up. The safeguarding lead recognises that more frequent whole-staff training would embed the safeguarding culture even further.

The interim early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and priorities for the setting. She works closely with the deputy headteacher to identify aspects of the provision that require improvement. For example, they have identified and started to successfully address pupils' progress in phonics. After recent feedback from the local authority, there have also been improvements in the nursery provision.

The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities still requires attention. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has become more involved in pupil progress meetings. This is helping to better identify which pupils require additional support. However, the SENCo does not have a strong enough strategic oversight of the attainment and progress that these pupils are making across the school. Furthermore, leaders have an insufficient grasp of the impact of interventions at a strategic level. Some interventions are not appropriately followed up after they have been reviewed.

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

The quality of teaching remains weak and improvements are fragile. The use of temporary staff for several classes does not provide sufficient continuity in pupils' learning. There are also several classes where teachers' expectations are too low in relation to what pupils can and should do. Consequently, pupils are not challenged and their attainment remains low.

In the strongest teaching, activities are more consistently matched to pupils' needs. Leaders have ensured that staff plan using the appropriate national curriculum content. Some staff are still developing their skills and confidence in ensuring that planning meets the needs of pupils with different abilities.

The quality of some aspects of teaching has become more consistent. In mathematics, teachers set an arithmetic and reasoning starter for every lesson. Pupils are responding well to this and calculation and reasoning skills are starting to improve across the school. However, a lot of pupils in upper key stage 2 have significant gaps in their mathematical understanding because of previously weak teaching. Sometimes, teachers focus on teaching mathematical processes and rules, rather than ensuring that pupils have a deep mathematical understanding of what they are doing.

In English, leaders have introduced a new consistent approach to the teaching of writing. This was apparent in some pupils' workbooks, where there was evidence to show that pupils are writing at length on a more frequent basis. In some year groups, too little time is spent on individual genres. Where this is the case, pupils' understanding of that genre does not reflect well in their final pieces of writing. Standards in handwriting and presentation are not consistently strong across the school. There has been a positive focus on teachers modelling writing to pupils.

Teachers in Year 5 and 6 have introduced a whole-class book approach for reading. This book is used as a stimulus for reading and writing activities. Pupils are motivated by this approach and spoke confidently about the different books that they have read and the authors that they like. In other year groups, a new approach to guided reading has been implemented. Leaders are aware that the different approaches need reviewing to see the impact that they are having on pupils' comprehension skills.

The teaching of phonics in the early years and in key stage 1 has improved since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher has worked with staff to ensure that pupils are grouped effectively and that additional support is put in place for pupils who fall behind. As a result of a more strategic approach, attainment in phonics is improving.

The quality of provision in the early years is improving because expectations of what children can do have risen. Children are settled and enjoy learning. Adults are



productive and support children's play effectively. There is a need to improve the quality of resources in the Nursery and in Reception. Leaders have plans and funding in place to address this.

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

Pupils' behaviour in class has improved since the last inspection. Leaders and staff are using the behaviour policy more consistently, which is helping to ensure that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Staff are attentive to pupils' needs and relationships are positive. Pupils' behaviour is not as good when they are not closely supervised by adults.

The number of fixed-term exclusions for this group of pupils has risen significantly during the current academic year. There were a high number of exclusions in the first half of the autumn term but they have declined since then. At the start of the year, leaders felt that they needed to address the behaviours of some pupils that were having a significantly negative impact on the learning of other pupils. The policy for exclusions requires review and clarification because its application is inconsistent. For example, some pupils have had fixed-term exclusions for persistent disruption or defiance. According to the school's policy, these behaviours should lead to an internal seclusion, rather than a fixed-term exclusion.

Leaders and staff have thought carefully about providing support for pupils who have social, emotional or behavioural needs. Nurture provision is used well in early years and key stage 1. Older pupils in the school benefit from outdoor learning opportunities in the school's forest area. The learning mentor has begun to gather useful information about the impact of this work. For some pupils, the provision enables them to regulate their emotions and be in a better position to access learning.

Attendance rates have dropped and persistent absence has risen this academic year, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Senior leaders have not provided sufficient leadership capacity or a clear strategy to improve attendance and support and challenge families where pupils are persistently absent. The senior safeguarding lead has been given responsibility for improving attendance but her safeguarding role is too complex to leave sufficient time to address attendance issues effectively. Despite this, some effective strategies have been put in place this year, such as the attendance competition between classes, which motivates many pupils.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Attainment remains low in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. This picture is consistent with the 2017 published outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and 2. Pupils' progress is too variable across different classes. Where teaching is stronger, progress is accelerating. However, a significant proportion of weaker

teaching has a detrimental impact on pupils' learning. Too many pupils are moving through the school with gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils' attainment is very low. This is particularly the case in reading and writing. There are several year groups where just a third of pupils are reaching the expected standards. Pupil premium funding is not being used effectively enough to raise pupils' attainment.

Leaders have improved their systems for tracking and analysing assessment information. Furthermore, teachers' assessments are now more accurate, especially when assessing whether pupils are achieving the expected standards for their age. However, there is still some work to do to ensure that staff have a more accurate understanding of assessing pupils who might be working above the expected standard for their age.

In Reception, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has been historically low. Improved provision in the early years is impacting positively on pupils' progress. Leaders recognise that some pupils' phonics skills are holding them back from achieving a good level of development. Several pupils have been identified for targeted support in order to address this.

### **External support**

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has been unequivocal in expressing concerns about the lack of progress the school is making in improving the quality of education it provides. Reports from the school improvement adviser's visits identify valid issues about what needs improving. In meetings with governors and school leaders, the local authority has rightly challenged the lack of urgency apparent in the actions being taken by the school.

A range of support has been put in place by the local authority. Leaders feel that some of this has proved successful. Examples include an early years project and a key stage 1 writing project commencing in the autumn term, as well as support with assessment in mathematics and the teaching of grammar in Year 6. The local authority also brokered the support of an experienced headteacher, although not all of the allocated time was used by the school.

The local authority's continued support is vital. It will be important to strategically match its support with the school's most pressing current priorities. This will help to develop leaders' capacity and enact a faster rate of improvement.

### **Further priorities for improvement:**

- ensure that pupil premium funding is used more precisely to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils
- evaluate the impact of pupil premium strategies more effectively
- make sure that all senior leaders are subject to performance management
- communicate a clear line management structure
- use individualised support and training to improve weaker teaching
- align the school improvement plan with the monitoring cycle, so that the plan can be evaluated for impact more effectively
- ensure that the policy and process for excluding pupils is reviewed
- put in place greater capacity for the leadership of attendance, so that persistent absence issues can be addressed more robustly.