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Mrs Rebecca Dolby-Molson
Headteacher
Weavers Close Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Dolby-Molson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weavers Close Church of England Primary School.

Following my visit to your school on 4 May 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that school improvement plans and the pupil premium strategy include clear objectives that have measurable targets linked to the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils in different subjects
- ensure that those responsible for governance are more effective in holding leaders to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils in different subjects
- check that actions and initiatives are implemented effectively and consistently by all staff.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, representatives of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, members of the local governing board, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You and I visited seven lessons and we looked at a sample of pupils' work. I also met with pupils and scrutinised documents relating to, for example, reviews of the school's work, the management of teachers' performance and safeguarding.

Context

There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection. As the previous head of school, you were appointed to the post of substantive headteacher in September 2017. A deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2017. The coordinator of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities left the school in February. The headteacher has taken on this role. The school business manager and family support worker have also left the school.

Main findings

There has been significant staff turbulence over recent years. You show determination to improve standards and tackle a legacy of underachievement. You are frank and realistic in your self-evaluation of the school's performance. Your dynamism is enabling the school to make progress in many areas. However, not enough progress has yet been made towards the school being judged good at the next inspection. Leaders and those responsible for governance have not ensured that some of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled sufficiently well or given sufficient priority and emphasis.

In 2017, the school did not meet the government's floor standards. Attainment in key stage 2 declined significantly in writing and mathematics. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national averages. All groups of pupils made weak progress. In key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was also well below the national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development in the early years was also below that seen nationally. Furthermore, the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils were generally below the attainment and progress of other pupils in school and well below pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average.

You are developing the use of a new system to track the attainment and progress of pupils. With this, leaders are able to analyse more closely pupils' progress from individual starting points. This includes the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the needs of these pupils are now identified more effectively. However, current school information and pupils' work show that too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, in too many classes, are

not on track to achieve the standards of which they are capable. While there are signs that rates of progress are beginning to improve, this is too inconsistent.

At the last and previous inspections, leaders were asked to improve the school improvement plan. Improvement plans are still not effective in helping the school move forward more rapidly. Plans do not make plain the key priorities the school needs to work on. They do not make clear exactly what needs to improve, nor do they set ambitious but realistic targets for different groups of pupils in different subjects. As a result, governors cannot effectively hold leaders to account. In February 2018, you commissioned a review of the use and impact of the pupil premium. However, the findings of the review have not been acted upon. The pupil premium plan is not fit for purpose. The plan also does not include clear success criteria by which the impact of the school's work can be measured.

Leaders were asked at the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You have rightly placed a strong focus on staff training and development. You are clear sighted in tackling weaker teaching. You are ensuring that teachers receive support to improve their practice. You have put into place coaching plans to support teachers to improve, for example, their subject knowledge, the planning of lessons and their expertise in assessing pupils' learning.

Leaders were asked to improve the quality of writing by improving the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils often produce an appropriate quantity of work. Standards of handwriting and presentation have improved. However, teachers are not consistently challenging pupils to use spelling, grammar and punctuation appropriate to their ability. More work is planned to develop this aspect later in the year. However, greater urgency is needed. In mathematics, teachers often use visual imagery well to support pupils' understanding. Teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to improve their reasoning skills. However, this is also not consistent. Sometimes, the work teachers ask pupils to complete is not challenging enough. As a result, many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Work in pupils' books shows that teaching is enabling pupils to make improving progress. However, as you recognise, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Targets for the management of teachers' performance are not sufficiently sharp to more effectively hold staff to account. Leaders were also asked to develop the roles of middle and other leaders, so they can have a bigger impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress. Subject leaders have had some training and are keen to raise standards. They have carried out some actions to check standards. They have created action plans for their areas of responsibility. Again, these are not sufficiently sharp to help hold staff to account.

In the early years, leaders were asked to ensure that children can better work or play without supervision. Senior leaders commissioned an audit of the early years this year, and the new leader for the early years has received support and training to

develop her understanding of early years provision and children's development. Improvements have been made to the indoor and outdoor areas. Leaders are working to meet the challenges presented by the classroom being on the first floor. Children show they are able to concentrate and persevere with tasks. Children were observed, for example, starting to write their own versions of the book 'A squash and a squeeze'. However, activities set for the children sometimes lack a clear focus or sufficient challenge to promote stronger progress. Current school information about the proportion of children on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the early years shows only slight improvement.

Safeguarding is effective. The single central record of employment checks is thorough and well organised. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils say they are safe and that bullying is rare. One pupil said that there is always 'someone you can talk to, to help you with your emotions'. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any concerns they may have. Pupils say that behaviour has improved. Where required, suitable support for behaviour is provided. In lessons, no disruption was observed. The majority of pupils are well behaved and apply themselves well to tasks set. However, some pupils lose concentration when work is not sufficiently challenging.

While many of your actions and initiatives are beginning to show signs of positive impact, the actions taken to address some areas have been implemented too slowly. Leaders have not given some of the recommendations for improvement identified at the previous inspection sufficient emphasis. As a result, the pace of improvement has not been rapid enough. The local governing board does not have a sharp enough grasp of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils in different classes and subjects to better hold leaders to account. Over time, senior leaders, the local governing board and the trust have not acted with sufficient urgency to bring about the necessary improvements. It is essential that leaders ensure that their initiatives have the maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment.

External support

The school has benefited from work with a teaching school alliance to support improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as well as the commissioning of external consultants to audit standards.

The school has been a part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust since 2013. The trust has not ensured that sufficiently urgent action to address key areas for improvement has been taken. For example, it has not ensured that improvement plans are sufficiently focused to help drive more rapid improvement nor has it ensured that the school's pupil premium strategy is fit for purpose. The trust now recognises the need for greater urgency if the school is to become a good school.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector