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Mrs Gordon
Headteacher
The Manor Church of England VC Primary School
Ruskin Avenue
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Wiltshire
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Dear Mrs Gordon

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Manor Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Nicola Berry, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 6 and 7 June 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 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 April 2017. 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 school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services

for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2017

- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels tackle inadequate teaching and eradicate underachievement
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders so that they fully contribute to ensuring that no groups of pupils underachieve
 - making sure leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning accurately to bring about swift improvement in pupils' progress, particularly for those eligible for additional funding
 - sharpening the focus on raising standards across all subjects quickly, including in the early years
 - ensuring that the trust provides effective challenge and support to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' outcomes, including those in the early years.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - insisting that teachers use accurate assessments to provide work that is closely matched to their pupils' needs
 - ensuring that teachers assess pupils effectively during lessons so that teaching is adapted promptly to pupils' needs and holds their attention to the task
 - improving the quality of the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils' residual underachievement is eradicated and pupils make strong progress from their different starting points
 - providing a curriculum that stretches and challenges pupils, particularly for middle-attaining and the most able pupils.

- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - reducing exclusions so that they are below national averages
 - further improving attendance so that persistent absence is minimised, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
 - enabling pupils to become determined learners and show resilience in their work
 - consistently applying the behaviour policy to eradicate low-level disruption in lessons

- improving the leadership systems to support the inclusion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, so that behaviour plans for individuals are fit for purpose and systems to support pupils who attend alternative provision are strengthened.

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 school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 June 2018

Evidence

The inspectors worked with senior leaders, particularly the headteacher and deputy headteacher, throughout the inspection. We conducted joint learning walks to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. We also looked at a range of pupils' work in writing and mathematics. Inspectors met with pupils, parents and carers to gather their views. An inspector met with newly qualified teachers and the pastoral team. Inspectors evaluated the school's development plan. An inspector also met with other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), representatives of the interim academy board (IAB) and the regional director and chief executive officer of the White Horse Federation (WHF). A range of school documents was scrutinised.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit in December 2017, there have been significant changes at the school. An interim headteacher provided by the WHF took up post in January 2018. The trust is advancing its plans to assume full control of the school in the summer of 2018. Some details to achieve this are yet to be resolved, particularly relating to diocesan representation on the board.

The academy interim board provides local governance and until recently has consisted of two members. There are now four members on the board with plans to add more and to create a 'shadow' governing body during the autumn 2018. This will include parent representatives and is part of the trust's plan to create stronger governance for the school to secure long-term success and stability.

A part-time teacher has been appointed to support additional teaching. The SENCo has increased the hours she works. School leaders are seeking to appoint two teachers for September. One is to provide additional teaching to enable the deputy headteacher to support improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Governors and trustees are taking appropriate action to recruit staff.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new headteacher has grasped the opportunity to make a fresh start. She has quickly secured the trust and engagement of pupils, staff and the wider school community. Together with other senior leaders, appropriate actions are starting to secure the improvements needed across the school. High-quality writing from each year group presented near the school entrance demonstrates to everyone the new, higher expectations in place.

The headteacher has rightly set about making sure that pupils start to make rapid progress. A '100-day plan' provides teachers with week-by-week challenge to

accelerate pupils' achievement. Precise targets created from weaknesses identified in pupils' understanding enable staff to plan more closely for pupils' specific learning needs. As a result, pupils across the school, including in early years, are now starting to make up ground in their learning. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are starting to make better progress in writing and mathematics than in previous years.

The SENco has recently taken on the responsibility for leading the provision for disadvantaged pupils and has put in a range of systems to ensure that the use of pupil premium funding improves. The recommendation in the inspection to have a review of pupil premium funding has not yet taken place and leaders are therefore planning for this to happen very soon.

Middle leaders, including those who have responsibilities for reading, writing, mathematics, phonics and early years, are increasingly contributing to improvements. They receive support through visits to see good practice in other schools and advice from WHF advisers. As a result, leaders are becoming more confident to support colleagues and to check on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.

Parents have much to say about the improvements they see in the school. They are pleased that staff are around and about in the playground each morning before school. They say that this is helping to improve communication and creates a welcoming atmosphere. Parents also report that school safety has improved through the addition of new security fencing around the playground.

The IAB is at an early stage of providing appropriate support and challenge to leaders. The school development plan is now a sharper document. It provides milestones showing the expected improvements to pupils' progress. This will help board members to channel their challenge more precisely. This aspect of leadership will need to show improvement before the next section 5 full inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Additional guidance has been given to teachers about how to assess pupils' progress. This means that the school now has a more accurate view of pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, teachers are planning learning activities that match the needs of pupils, particularly the low- and middle-attaining pupils, more often. During some lessons, however, there are still examples of pupils' misconceptions going unnoticed. This leads to pupils losing their focus and behaving less well.

The school is working on improving the accuracy of assessment. This includes a focus on checking that the information leaders have about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is accurate. For example, the SENco is ensuring that all pupils who require an education, health and care plan have one in place.

There are improvements to the quality and consistency of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, teachers plan for pupils' writing skills to develop over several lessons and then to write a complete piece of work. Pupils are encouraged to take more books home and to read more widely. Increasingly in mathematics, teachers set problems that are suitably challenging. As a result, pupils are encouraged to use their number skills to solve problems.

Pupils now experience 'writing journeys' that go through a sequence of 'collect it, de-construct it, plan it and write it'. Pupils' written work in English shows increasing confidence to use grammar and punctuation skills to write in a range of styles and genres. Expectations are not as high in other subjects. Pupils' writing in a range of other subjects such as science or history is less developed.

A fresh start for presentation in pupils' books began in January. Success is evident for some pupils. However, there remain examples of weaker presentation, particularly in letter formation. Weaknesses in spelling still exist across the school although more pupils are getting off to a better start with this through improvements to the teaching and assessment of phonics.

Teaching, learning and assessment in the Reception classes are also improving. Here, staff have made several changes, for example to the organisation of resources, indoor and outdoor learning environments and to how they assess achievement throughout the year.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have introduced strategies to support better attendance and punctuality. Pupils who need extra help to attend school well, including some disadvantaged pupils, receive places at the breakfast club. This has resulted in a marked improvement in both punctuality and attendance for these pupils. There is also improved communication with parents who need support to make sure that their children attend school well. There is rapid and rigorous follow-up for pupils who do not attend. Because of these and other strategies, attendance is showing steady improvement and is currently only slightly below the national average.

Pupils talk about improvements in the school and say that lessons are 'more exciting'. They also welcome changes to the behaviour policy and they like the increased rewards for behaving well. However, although pupils move about the school calmly and respectfully, it is too soon to see impact on behaviour particularly during lessons. There are still instances of low-level disruption. Teaching assistants support the management of behaviour during lessons. As new approaches embed and behaviour improves, leaders plan to ensure that support focuses on learning rather than managing behaviour.

Staff are consciously working to improve pupils' resilience. Teachers expect pupils to read and write more often and to think for themselves during lessons. This is

beginning to make a difference to pupils' confidence and positive approaches to their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

There is a firm focus to improve pupils' outcomes. There are many signs across the school that this is starting to happen. In the Reception classes, there is precise tracking of the progress children make and there are more targeted learning activities. These have resulted in more children than in previous years acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in Year 1.

In Year 1, there is careful, frequent checking to work out the phonics skills and knowledge that pupils need alongside a systematic approach to phonics teaching. As a result, there is a sharp rise in the proportion of pupils who are reaching the expected standard in their phonics knowledge.

Across all year groups, improvements to pupils' outcomes are emerging. There is an overall upward trend in reading, writing and mathematics, although there are some inconsistencies for some groups and in some year groups between classes. For example, disadvantaged pupils and boys continue to achieve less well, particularly in reading and writing.

External support

The regional WHF director provides challenge to leaders and ensures that the school receives appropriate external support. This includes targeted support from WHF advisers and visits to other schools within the WHF. Staff attend 'moderation clinics'. These provide support for staff to ensure that they assess pupils' work accurately. School leaders are also working with other agencies, including the local authority. For example, there has been moderation of the outcomes in the Reception Year this term and moderation in other year groups is expected this term.

Trustees and directors recognise the need to establish a governing board with strong local representation. This is something that they are working to establish as the trust moves forward.