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Mrs Helen Heap
Headteacher
Rounds Green Primary School
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Dear Mrs Heap

Special measures monitoring inspection of Rounds Green Primary School

Following my visit with Michael Appleby, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 27 and 28 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 third 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 school should take further action to:

- ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are sufficiently developed in foundation subjects
- make sure that the school improvement plan has sufficiently measurable success criteria and that actions in the plan have precise timescales.

Yours sincerely

Matt Meckin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are effective by:
 - adhering closely to the school's safeguarding policy
 - assessing risks regularly and taking immediate action on potential or identified shortcomings
 - teaching pupils to keep safe from risks such as child exploitation and radicalisation.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that middle leaders effectively lead on their subjects or areas so that pupils achieve appropriately for their age
 - monitoring pupils' progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and taking action so that no pupil falls behind
 - ensuring that governors discharge their core statutory functions effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - securing the accuracy of teachers' assessments to gain a precise view of pupils' progress
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons well, meet the needs of different pupils and check their understanding
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply, develop and refine their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare, including pupils' attendance, by:
 - ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time at the start of the school day
 - eradicating low-level disruption in lessons, so that pupils are not distracted and their learning is not interrupted
 - dealing with bullying concerns effectively and in a timely manner.
- Improve the provision in early years by:
 - ensuring that leaders have high expectations of what children should know and do, so that children systematically develop the skills they need in preparation for their next stage of education
 - assessing all risks and taking the necessary action to ensure that children learn safely
 - planning complementary activities so that children do not interrupt others who

need to listen carefully or work quietly

- ensuring that resources effectively support children’s learning and inspire their interest, for example by choosing appropriate books for reading sessions
- ensuring that parents contribute to staff’s knowledge about what children know and can do and keeping parents informed so that they know how to support their children at home.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 27 June 2018 to 28 June 2018

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to a range of other leaders and staff, as well as speaking to pupils informally and formally. Inspectors also 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 written self-evaluation, the improvement plan, and your records that evaluate the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. I also 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

You continue to serve as headteacher on an interim basis. The new assistant headteacher started in April. The deputy headteacher recently left the school and has been replaced by an interim deputy headteacher. Staffing in key stage 1 has not been consistent and three out of four teachers are currently supply teachers. While recruitment has been challenging, you have secured teaching staff in all but one class for September. You are also managing an unavoidable and challenging situation with the school budget. A new governor with educational experience has joined the governing body. As yet, there has been limited communication from the identified academy sponsor.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

In the face of adversity, your strong leadership continues to drive improvement across the school. You and the chair of governors have managed school budget challenges and staffing changes very well. Weaker teaching and leadership continue to be addressed. The two new senior leaders combine well with other leaders to provide increasingly effective leadership capacity to the school. Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly and outcomes are gradually rising.

You refined the school improvement plan for the summer term so that it encompassed the most pressing priorities. Actions are precise and have enabled leaders to focus on successfully improving aspects of behaviour and teaching. While there are success criteria in the improvement plan, they are not sufficiently measurable, and some timescales for actions could be even more precise. With the

increased leadership capacity, you have rightly identified the importance of clearly outlining leaders' responsibilities within next year's improvement plan.

Leaders have been carrying out more regular checks on the quality of teaching. Lesson observations and checks on pupils' books demonstrate that teachers are given effective feedback on how to improve. For example, leaders pick out pertinent next steps such as challenging the most able pupils or developing reasoning skills in mathematics. Some of the checks look back at teachers' previous feedback in order to evaluate whether their next steps have been achieved. However, this process is not used consistently and needs to be embedded. When carrying out joint observations with leaders during the inspection, senior leaders demonstrated a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has made clear improvements to the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. She has a good grasp of pupils' needs and tracks their progress through a broader range of interventions. Sensibly, the SENCo has introduced just a few key interventions, so that staff can receive appropriate training and the interventions have every chance of success. For example, pupils' reading ages have been assessed to identify particular pupils who require intervention for phonics. Early indications show that this is having a positive impact.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. This is a significant turnaround since the previous inspection. You have recently taken on the role of designated safeguarding lead and work closely with the family support worker to discuss safeguarding cases. Leaders and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities, and concerns are followed up tenaciously through the online recording system. The chair of governors is proactive and has led staff training on the 2018 updates to the statutory guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Pupils' understanding of the dangers associated with radicalisation has been enhanced by specific teaching sessions in key stage 2.

The governing body continues to be strengthened. The chair provides a high level of support to the headteacher and he arranged for an interim deputy headteacher to be seconded from another school. Governing body meetings and visits provide appropriate challenge to leaders. Governors now have clear descriptions of their roles so that they have a clear understanding of questions to ask leaders within their areas of responsibility.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching in Reception is a notable strength. The early years leader has developed staff well. Staff have a shared understanding of children's needs and use assessment well to identify children's next steps in learning. Characters from different books have been used to help children understand the different characteristics of effective learning. Staff teach writing particularly well. The

handwriting scheme is taught with absolute precision. Consequently, children hold pencils properly and form their letters accurately. Children enjoy writing and make strong progress.

Staff in Nursery form strong bonds with children and ensure that children are settled and happy. Children enjoy the activities and socialise well. When adults intervene, they generally ask questions that enable children to develop their learning. However, some activities do not provide sufficient challenge to extend children's thinking.

Due to unforeseen staffing changes, teaching in key stage 1 has not developed as well. Consequently, pupils' progress has slowed in this phase of the school. Teachers do not consistently share rich enough language with pupils or give them precise demonstrations of how to develop high-quality writing. You recognise this and have identified that it is an appropriate whole-school priority in moving forward. Phonics teaching has improved in key stage 1. Where teaching is strongest, expectations are high and pupils are actively involved in the sessions. However, this is not yet consistent across all phonics groups.

Teaching in key stage 2 has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Teachers set clear intentions for lessons, and in the vast majority of classrooms, pupils work hard and are making up for previously lost ground.

Teachers have positive relationships with pupils across the school. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. They generally work diligently and take pride in their work. Work is generally well matched for pupils who are working towards or at the expected national curriculum standard. However, work is not yet consistently well matched to stretch most-able pupils, or to support pupils who have SEN or have low prior attainment.

Pupils are becoming increasingly motivated to read because the culture for reading has been well developed. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the different books that they are reading and their favourite authors. Classroom doors have been dressed with the theme of each class's current book. The new '100 books to read' initiative is helping to ensure that pupils read widely and often. The system for hearing pupils read individually has been adapted and pupils are being heard reading more regularly.

Different approaches to teaching reading comprehension have been trialled in key stage 2. While this has been a useful period of transition for staff's learning of different approaches, it has led to some inconsistencies in practice. Some pupils are not reading sufficiently demanding texts and there are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' responses to comprehension questions. You are aware of this and have already started to refine your policy and associated training for teachers, ready for the next academic year.

You have put significant work into the development of the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers' assessments are now accurate. This has been validated by local authority moderation for early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 during this academic year.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There has been a shift in pupils' behaviour. They are taking more responsibility and pride in their own actions, both in the classroom and at social times. They are also starting to show more mature and well-mannered attitudes. Staff manage behaviour well and keep pupils on track in lessons.

In response to the previous inspection, behaviour at social times has been completely overhauled. Pupils commented on how much they enjoy the range of activities on offer outside and how much behaviour has improved. You have staggered lunchtimes and put in place better supervision. Staff work well with pupils in a broad range of activities. Pupils are socialising much more appropriately.

The behaviour lead has developed a comprehensive analysis of behavioural incidents. She works closely with teachers to identify pupils who require additional support, either through specialist external advice or through interventions in school. The support is proving successful and incidents, including fixed-term exclusions, are gradually reducing. Alleged bullying incidents are well tracked and followed up.

Pupils' rates of attendance are still not high enough. During the summer term, leaders have carried out targeted meetings with parents of children who are persistently absent. This has started to have an impact; attendance in the summer term is higher than it was the spring term. You have already identified that reward systems for behaviour are not having the desired impact among pupils. You have plans to reinvigorate your approach in preparation for the autumn term.

Outcomes for pupils

Attainment is gradually rising, albeit slowly in parts of the school.

Outcomes in early years are positive. Children make strong progress from their starting points and assessment information shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is likely to rise significantly when compared with that in previous years. Differences in attainment for boys and for children who speak English as an additional language have diminished as the year has progressed.

Due to inconsistent staffing in key stage 1, pupils' attainment has not risen as positively. Your assessment information and the work in pupils' books show that progress in writing and reading is not as strong as it is in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is

likely to rise slightly when compared with that of the previous academic year. However, you recognise that it is still not high enough.

In key stage 2, attainment is rising when compared with that at a similar stage in the previous academic year. Assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate that more pupils are attaining the expected standards for their age. There is still work to be done to ensure that more pupils attain the higher standards. Current Year 6 pupils have experienced weak teaching earlier on in key stage 2. While they have made effective progress during their time in Year 6, their attainment is likely to be low at the end of the year. Due to inaccurate teacher assessment when pupils were in key stage 1, pupils' end-of-key-stage progress scores are highly likely to be weak when compared with national figures.

Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not developed consistently well in foundation subjects. You are well aware of this and have already given middle leaders time to start mapping out the content and approach to the wider curriculum for the autumn term.

External support

You have received effective support from the local authority's school improvement adviser (SIA). While some of the specific support for teaching and learning has ceased, the SIA has carried out targeted leadership work with the new assistant headteacher. The local authority continues to provide further support through the task group meetings. The informal partnership with a teaching school led to a secondment of the interim deputy headteacher. This has helped to provide additional leadership capacity.

You continue to work closely with the local authority on the school budget. Unforeseen circumstances have brought about significant challenges with the budget, but you and the governors have managed this well. This area requires continued support from the local authority, so that the challenges do not compromise the improvement of the school.