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11 September 2018

Mr Andrew Morley  
Headteacher  
Dines Green Primary School  
Tudor Way  
Worcester  
Worcestershire  
WR2 5QH

Dear Mr Morley

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Dines Green Primary School**

Following my visit, with Michael Onyon, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 July 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 February 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 may continue to 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 Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are effective by:
  - updating the safeguarding policy to ensure it reflects current government guidance and the school's own context
  - ensuring that all staff read and understand the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, and follow them closely
  - making sure all staff receive updated safeguarding training
  - identifying and training a member of staff to be the designated teacher for children who are looked after
  - ensuring that all procedures for recruiting staff follow government guidance, are robust and adhered to
  - making sure that statutory procedures for removing pupils from the school's register are followed
  - providing appropriate supervision at breaktimes and lunchtimes to keep pupils safe
  - regularly reviewing that checks made on all people working in the school are accurate
  - ensuring that strategies to improve rates of attendance are effective, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - improvement plans identify clearly the main priorities to improve the school's performance and the outcomes which leaders expect to see following monitoring, evaluation and review
  - the impact of the use of the additional funding received to support disadvantaged pupils, including in the early years, is evaluated to check it is raising the attainment of these pupils
  - monitoring of teaching accurately identifies weaknesses and effective action is taken to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
  - performance appraisal processes are used robustly to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics
  - the curriculum is planned to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in a range of subjects

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure teachers consistently:
  - have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and how they should present their work
  - plan work to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, especially the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils, to enable them to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - provide opportunities for pupils to write at length, including across a range of subjects
  - plan opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning
  - address misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - check that pupils understand the feedback they receive
  - set homework in line with the school's policy.

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.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 July 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other school staff, groups of pupils, parents, three members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the company that provides school improvement services for the local authority.

### **Context**

The new headteacher took up his post at the school in April 2018. No other staff have left or joined the school since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2018.

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

Leadership continues to improve. The new headteacher has wasted no time in getting to grips with what needs to be done to improve the quality of education. He and the deputy headteacher have formed a strong team. Together, they are systematically tackling the remaining weaknesses. As a result, pupils' progress is improving.

Leaders' plans to improve the school reflect a sharper focus on driving up standards. These plans set out clearly how leaders will judge whether actions are leading to good-enough outcomes for pupils. Governors are fully involved in checking whether plans are being implemented effectively. As a result, there is a shared and broadly accurate view among leaders at all levels of what is working well and what needs to be done differently.

The evaluation of how well things are going is largely accurate because it is based on a broad range of evidence. This includes leaders' analysis of information about pupils' achievement, observations of learning in lessons and the work in pupils' books. As a result, leaders know why some pupils are making good progress and why, for some, it is still not good enough. Consequently, leaders target their efforts where most improvement is required.

Governance has improved further since the previous monitoring inspection. A group of governors, named the 'Scrutiny Committee', frequently meets with senior leaders to discuss the school's effectiveness. This group challenges leaders well to provide evidence that the quality of education is improving. These governors ask searching questions about the information provided to test out whether outcomes for pupils really are getting better, and whether improvement is fast enough.

Changes to the organisation of the school's curriculum have helped teachers strike a better balance between subjects. There is now more time to focus on developing

pupils' basic mathematical knowledge. As a result, pupils are beginning to calculate more fluently. Pupils use what they are learning in subjects such as history, geography and science more frequently to make their writing in English lessons meaningful. This motivates pupils to write because they enjoy the topics they are writing about. However, the links between subjects work less well the other way round. Pupils do not use their writing skills effectively when writing outside English lessons. Some, but not many, links exist between mathematics and the wider curriculum. This limits pupils' experiences of using mathematics in meaningful situations.

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

The quality of teaching is getting better. This is why many pupils are now making the progress of which they are capable. Nevertheless, weaknesses remain. Teaching quality varies between classes. In some classes it is less effective in some subjects than it is in others. Some teaching in the school is still inadequate. As a result, some pupils are now learning well but others are not so lucky.

Teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are increasingly accurate. As a result, teachers are getting better at setting work that helps pupils make good progress. Pupils agree. Some say their work is getting harder. They like this and are rising to the challenge. However, other pupils say that their work is still too easy. They are right. Some teachers still do not expect pupils to work hard enough. Some pupils' books show that they have to complete work that they can already do. Their teachers do not move them on to harder work quickly enough. This limits the progress these pupils make and prevents them reaching high-enough standards of attainment.

Some teachers are skilled in helping pupils to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils say they appreciate this. They are keen to do as well as they can. Therefore, when pupils receive clear guidance, their work improves notably. On the other hand, pupils in some classes say they do not know whether their work is good enough, nor how it could be better. This has a negative impact on the quality of their work. Errors and misunderstandings are not sorted out. Consequently, the same mistakes keep occurring.

Teachers have taken on board advice and training in how to teach mathematics effectively. Lessons now follow one another in logical sequences that help pupils gradually build knowledge and confidence in different aspects of mathematics. In addition, teachers are becoming more adept at getting pupils to apply mathematical thinking. As a result, standards in mathematics are improving. There is still a long way to go for some teachers, but early signs are promising.

Teachers have continued to improve their teaching of reading. The quality of phonics teaching in the early years and key stage 1 is notably better than at the

time of the previous monitoring inspection. As a result, pupils are more confident to have a go at reading. Older pupils are learning to unpick texts so as to understand the meaning more easily. This is improving their appreciation of the pleasures of reading. Some Year 6 pupils are able to discuss the effect of an author's choice of language on the meaning and tone of a piece of writing. However, some older pupils still have weak phonic knowledge. This is because they were not taught well, in the past, about letters and the sounds they make. This hampers their ability to quickly recognise words or to make sense of what they are reading.

Teachers now teach the skills of writing more effectively. As a result, pupils are beginning to write as well as they should, given their ages and abilities. However, far too often, teachers still permit pupils to hand in work that is inaccurate, sloppy or poorly written. Pupils' books still contain many basic errors. In part, this is because pupils have not learned to spell, punctuate or use grammar correctly in the past. Pupils in key stage 2 are missing a lot of knowledge in these areas. Teachers are attempting to overcome these weaknesses, but more is needed to compensate pupils for the failings of previous years. Even where the quality of teaching is relatively strong, pupils' books show that teachers are not doing enough to tackle the problem.

Teachers encourage pupils to use their writing skills in different subjects. In some cases, this is effective and pupils write well. More often, the tasks set for pupils to write in science, history, geography and so forth prevent them from writing well. For example, some of the worksheets used provide little space for pupils to record their thoughts. When this happens, pupils cannot write in full sentences, or write enough sentences to convey what they want to. As well as limiting pupils' progress in writing, this hampers their achievement in the wider curriculum.

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

Leaders place great emphasis on taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure that pupils' well-being is promoted. As a result, pupils are happy at school. They generally behave well because they want to please their teachers. They are very loyal to their school and speak highly of the care they receive.

Leaders continue to work closely with parents to try to reduce the high levels of absence from school. This is proving to be difficult. Improvements noted earlier in the year have not been sustained. Levels of attendance have dropped again. Too many pupils are absent too often. Worryingly, the pupils who are absent most often are those who struggle to catch up on missed learning when they return. This is having a very bad impact on their outcomes. This is a significant reason why some pupils, many of whom have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, have made little progress this year.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Outcomes for many pupils are improving rapidly. Most pupils are making better progress and catching up to where they should be. Standards continue to rise.

Nevertheless, attainment is still unacceptably low overall. In the past, pupils underachieved hugely. Therefore, even though many are making good progress now, most pupils in the school are still not working at the standards expected for their ages. This means that fewer than half of pupils are ready for the demands of the year group they are about to enter in September. One in every six pupils in Year 6 cannot read, write or do mathematics well enough to be ready for the move to secondary school in a few weeks' time.

Pupils in some classes are still not making the improved progress they need to make up the lost ground caused by the poor quality of their education in recent years. This is because the quality of teaching they receive remains inadequate. This is another reason why standards are still lower than they should be.

Some groups of pupils are not making enough progress across the school because teachers still struggle to support them effectively in lessons. This is particularly the case for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. In addition, previously higher-attaining pupils are not, on the whole, attaining as well as they did in the past. Most are working to a standard that is typical for their ages but no better. This is not high enough, given their capabilities.

Disadvantaged pupils still make less progress than other pupils in the school in most instances. Consequently, the considerable difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is not reducing quickly enough. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is high. It is more than half. Therefore, around half of the pupils in the school are still a long way behind other pupils in England.

## **External support**

A range of support provided by the company that provides school improvement services on behalf of the local authority is making a positive difference. For example, the support given to the coordinator for SEN provision and the early years leader has helped these leaders to work more strategically. The company keeps a check on the school's progress by visiting to see the school in action and holding termly meetings with senior leaders and governors. By overseeing the improvement in this way, the company has helped the school to celebrate successes and note where further improvement is necessary. However, meetings to evaluate progress are not challenging enough. The school's assertions about how well things are going are too readily accepted. This has led to the school being given an overly positive view of its current effectiveness. This risks undermining the considerable effort that is still required for the school to be ready for the removal of special measures.