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17 October 2018

Mrs C Jobling  
Executive Headteacher  
Edgar Stammers Primary Academy  
Harden Road  
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Walsall  
West Midlands  
WS3 1RQ

Dear Mrs Jobling

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Edgar Stammers Primary Academy**

Following my visit with John Bates, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 2 and 3 October 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy 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.

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

I am copying this letter to the local academy board, the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram

**Ofsted Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - set work for pupils that is securely based on their prior knowledge and understanding
  - plan classroom activities which use time productively to maximise pupils' learning
  - provide pupils with the opportunity to write in a range of contexts within different subject areas
  - require pupils to apply the knowledge and understanding they have acquired in new ways.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders recognise in their planning and their allocation of resources the absolute priority of improving the quality of teaching
  - improving training and ongoing support for middle leaders to ensure that they are skilled and confident enough to fulfil their roles
  - making sure that key stage 2 teachers understand how to implement a clear school policy for the teaching of reading, and checking that they comply with it
  - developing a rich programme of teaching and activities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness
  - establishing a more effective two-way communication with parents so that leaders are able to harness parents' energies in improving attendance and supporting pupils' learning.
- Increase the proportions of pupils at all stages, including the early years, who attain the highest standards by identifying all those pupils with the potential to do so, and ensuring that teachers set challenging work which requires them to think deeply.

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

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 02 October 2018 to 03 October 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders. Inspectors also met with the trust's director of primary academies, the chair and vice chair of the local academy board and a parent governor. They spoke to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day and met with a group of parents in the new community hub. They met with all staff at the end of day 1. A range of documents were considered, including the school's improvement plan and the school's current information about pupils' progress.

This monitoring inspection focused on key stages 1 and 2 and, particularly, on the impact of the changes in leadership since March 2018, and on the area for improvement relating to pupils' writing.

### **Context**

The previous headteacher left the school at the end of April 2018. As part of the multi academy trust's support arrangements, an executive headteacher was appointed from 1 May 2018. At the same time, a head of school was appointed. There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous monitoring inspection. Three teachers have left the school. This includes the teacher with responsibility for managing provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Three teachers have been appointed. The assistant headteacher has returned to the school following maternity leave and has taken responsibility for leading developments in pupils' behaviour and welfare. The former chair of the academy local board is now the vice-chair. The former vice-chair of the academy local board has been appointed as the new chair.

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

The executive headteacher was appointed on 1 May 2018 and had previously supported the school in the role as local leader of education. The executive headteacher is very clear about what the school has done, and what still needs to be done, to fully address the areas for improvement identified at the inspection in November 2016.

An effective partnership between the executive headteacher and the newly appointed head of school, and other leaders, has been established quickly. Leaders have the confidence of staff, governors and parents and are providing strong leadership and clear direction. All staff and governors share the leadership's vision and ambition to increase the pace of improvement and the quality of education

provided for all pupils.

As a result of the new and redefined leadership roles, clear lines of accountability have been established. The school is now fully staffed. Expectations have been raised and all staff have responded positively. Team spirit is strong.

Monitoring activities are now tightly focused on the school's areas for improvement. More effective use of pupils' assessment information ensures that everyone is accountable for, and focused on, improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has fully addressed the leadership issues raised at the previous monitoring inspection in March 2018.

Phase leaders are clear about their priorities and have been allocated time to fulfil their roles. Since the last monitoring inspection, they have grown in confidence and skill. They are no longer reliant on external support. They are working effectively together and with senior leaders.

A full timetable and programme of activities is in place to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, leaders at all levels have a shared understanding of what needs to be done to drive improvements forward. Governors and staff say that there is a heightened sense of urgency and constant professional dialogue about what is working well and what needs to be changed. Inspectors agree.

Newly appointed leaders for English, and for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, have quickly gained a secure understanding of the priorities for their areas of responsibility. They are well supported by other leaders and staff. These are recent changes and will be reviewed at the next monitoring inspection.

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

Inspection findings reflect the school's own judgements that teaching has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. The appointment of new teachers has contributed to this.

Leaders are aware that these improvements have not yet led to better achievement for all groups of pupils in all subjects. For example, those pupils who have fallen behind in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 are not all catching up as quickly in writing as they are in mathematics and reading.

Leaders have taken actions to address this. Teaching groups have been reorganised to ensure more focused teaching of writing skills, such as handwriting, letter formation and basic punctuation. Work in pupils' books shows that more teachers are correcting errors in basic punctuation, spelling and grammar. Pupils are responding well to this. As result, improvements in pupils' basic writing skills, over time, are more evident. More work needs to be done to ensure that pupils have opportunities to master these skills and write at greater depth for different

purposes. The newly appointed English leader has clear actions in place and work is underway.

During the inspection, pupils, of all ages, talked enthusiastically about the whole-school writing project linked to 'The Dot', a popular children's picture book. There are attractive displays of pupils' extended writing, from all classes, in corridors and classrooms. Year 2 pupils were eager to discuss their pieces of writing. They could talk confidently about how simple revisions and corrections had improved their work. This strong practice in teaching writing is not yet consistent across all classes.

Effective training for teaching assistants has been organised and additional adult support allocated in classrooms. Teachers appreciate this. Individual learning plans are in place for those pupils who are behind in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are working effectively to meet the needs of these pupils. These are recent changes and will be reviewed at the next monitoring inspection.

Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that the improvements noted at the last monitoring visit have been sustained and further developed. Pupils continue to respond positively to the 'times table' routines. Work in pupils' books shows that the school's marking policy is well understood by pupils and is leading to sustained improvement. Standards are rising. More pupils demonstrate confidence in applying their mathematical skills to solve problems.

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

Leaders have undertaken important work to rebuild relationships with parents. This has been necessary following an extended period of instability in staffing prior to, and immediately following, the monitoring inspection in March 2018. A building on the school site has been converted to a community hub. This is used as a space for the school to meet with parents and for parents to access support and courses. Parents are working with the school and the local authority to further develop the space. Parents were extremely positive about these changes.

The Parent Teacher Association has been re-established to support the development of the hub. A teacher has taken responsibility for this area. The school's records show that better communication with parents is leading to improved attendance overall, and for specific groups of pupils. For example, school records show that the difference between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is narrowing. Overall attendance has improved when compared to the same period last year and is closer to the national average.

Leaders are now analysing information about pupils' attendance alongside information about their learning and progress. There is now a clear picture of where poor attendance is having a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. The school is working closely with families to share this information and harness their support.

There are signs that this is making a positive difference. This work is in the early stages, but it is a significant stride towards the area for improvement identified at the inspection in November 2016.

The changes made to the start of the school day have had a positive impact. Parents value the increased opportunities to come in to school to read with their children. There is a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere at the start of the day. Pupils come in ready to settle and learn. This reflects the school's raised expectations.

In lessons, most pupils demonstrate a keen interest in their learning. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other. They support each other's learning well. During the inspection, pupils discussed their views on the importance of 'learning and working together'. They listened to each other with respect and spoke with confidence. These activities are contributing to the improvements in pupils' engagement in learning and respect for others.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Practice in the early years continues to strengthen. Children make strong progress from their different starting points. At the end of the Reception Year in 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development improved further. It is closer to the national figure. Leaders are aware that there is scope to improve this further, and they aim to be at least in line with the national figure. They are also working hard to increase the proportion of children who exceed the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year in the specific areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved and was close to the national average. This is a result of effective leadership and improvements in teachers' subject knowledge. The school's assessment information indicates that these improvements have been sustained.

Nonetheless, in 2018, at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Leaders were all disappointed with this. Urgent actions were taken to address the issues. Additional support and interventions are in place to ensure that these pupils, now in Year 3, catch up and secure their basic skills. Work in pupils' books shows the positive impact of this, particularly in mathematics and reading. This will be reviewed further at the next monitoring inspection.

Provisional information for 2018 shows that by the end of Year 6 more pupils achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than in the previous two years. Overall attainment was closer to the national average. It is pleasing to see that the difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and

others nationally had narrowed. This supports the school's own records and assessments.

Provisional information for 2018 also shows an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards in mathematics and reading by the end of Year 6. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards was close to the national average. Work in pupils' books, across key stages 1 and 2, indicates that more teachers are recognising and responding to pupils who are capable of working at higher standards in mathematics.

An external review of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was commissioned. Leaders acted swiftly to address the recommendations. These pupils are receiving better support in the mainstream classrooms than previously. There is evidence that their progress, from their different starting points, is strong or improving. However, teachers' skills and expertise are not yet consistently strong enough to ensure sustained improvements in this area. This will be a focus of the next monitoring inspection.

### **External support**

The trust has managed the transition to a new leadership structure efficiently and effectively. The intensive support from Featherstone is beginning to bear fruit. The school is now standing on its own feet and using internal expertise to drive improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. The trust has honoured all actions identified on the support programme. The school is staffed with a full complement of permanent teachers. The trust continues to monitor the school's progress and provide effective support and challenge. Succession plans are in place for the continued development of leaders to ensure that the improvements made are sustained.