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Mrs Moira Cross
Wood End Primary School
Wood Street
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Warwickshire
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Dear Mrs Cross

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wood End Primary School

Following my visit with Collette Higgins, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 November 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 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 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 Community Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve progress and thereby raise attainment throughout key stages 1 and 2, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for pupils across the curriculum, especially for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - plan work which meets pupils' needs, including the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - adjust tasks as necessary during lessons in response to pupils' understanding and their rates of progress
 - provide work that maintains the pupils' interest so they have positive attitudes to learning
 - provide high-quality phonics teaching, based on a consistent approach
 - carefully match reading books to pupils' abilities
 - give pupils regular opportunities to write at length
 - plan work that develops pupils' subject-specific skills across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the multi-academy trust, governors and school leaders understand the accountability structure of the school and their roles and responsibilities
 - school development activities are carefully prioritised, sharply focused on the key weaknesses in school and accurately evaluated to ensure that they are having an impact on improving outcomes for pupils
 - weaknesses in teaching are identified and the right support and guidance is put in place
 - pupils' progress is assessed accurately across the curriculum, and assessment information is used carefully to plan work at the right level for all pupils and to provide support quickly to any who may be falling behind
 - additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - training and support is provided for leaders to enable them to become effective in their roles
 - disruption in lessons is minimised so that it does not stop pupils from learning

- the curriculum is planned and taught to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their skills across a range of subjects
- school leaders' roles and responsibilities, particularly those of the head of school, are reviewed to provide them with enough time to carry out checks on teaching, learning and assessment and provide support where it is needed.

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.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 13 to 14 November 2018

Evidence

The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, associate headteacher, middle leaders, teaching staff, pupils, two governors and the chief executive officer of Community Academies Trust.

The inspectors observed teaching in different year groups, looked at work in pupils' books and on display, and watched an assembly. They also examined various school documents, attendance information, reports about the school's work, the school's website and the single central record of checks on staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils and observed their behaviour at different times in the school day. The inspectors observed early morning routines as parents were bringing their children to school. One inspector spoke with parents.

Context

The school is in the Community Academies Trust. A local governing body provides governance of two trust schools: Wood End Primary and Dordon Primary.

An executive headteacher continues to divide her time between the two schools. She is responsible for the work and performance of both schools. An associate headteacher provides day-to-day operational leadership at Wood End Primary.

The school continues to operate five mixed-year-group classes and a Nursery.

Since the previous monitoring inspection in July 2018, the teaching staff team has remained unchanged, but some staff now teach in different classes. For several lessons, including English and mathematics, pupils are taught in single year groups. For other lessons, pupils are taught in their mixed-year-group classes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

As reported in previous monitoring inspections, strong leadership has united the staff team, lifted morale and improved the school's effectiveness. Leaders at all levels understand their roles, do their best and respond positively to the guidance and training they receive.

Leaders have set several non-negotiable school improvement targets. These targets are well informed and realistic, and all staff know what they are. Indeed, subject leaders regularly check on teaching and look at pupils' books as part of their work to monitor the school's progress towards coming out of special measures. The focus for the whole school on reading and writing has paid off, as can be seen in the quality of work in pupils' books. Literacy standards in all year groups are rising because of evaluative leadership, staff training and clear-sighted aims.

The leadership of mathematics continues to inject energy and enthusiasm into teaching and has done a lot of work to make sure all staff are following the school's agreed policy. Leaders regularly observe mathematics teaching and provide staff with verbal and written feedback. However, some of this feedback is rather vague or generalised and does not identify the most or the least successful aspects of teaching and learning. Consequently, staff do not get clear and specific guidance about how to improve what they do. In addition, leaders' checks on teaching have not picked up some very evident shortcomings, such as repeated errors in pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary.

Similarly, the leadership of special educational needs, which continues to present as capable, organised and informed, has now improved provision to the point where further refinement is now possible. For example, individual education plans for pupils who require them are in place, are suitably informed and shared with the right people. Nevertheless, some of the targets set for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) lack detail, which makes it hard to measure their progress in a meaningful way.

Assessment in all subjects is much improved. During this inspection, inspectors checked the work in pupils' books against the school's records of their progress and current attainment. In every case, pupils' standard of work matched the judgements made by staff. This points to a significant step forward. The use of assessment information in class to pitch work at the right level still has room for improvement, but there is no doubt that leaders and staff understand age-related expectations for pupils' achievement in different subjects. Across the school and in all subjects, expectations have risen.

As has been the case at previous monitoring inspections, pupil premium funding is used correctly and creatively. For instance, in order to improve targeted pupils' achievement, well-being and engagement in learning, the school provides additional activities during and after the school day. There is a newly formed film club, open to pupils and their parents, which promotes constructive approaches to developing pupils' literacy skills. In a similar vein, a soon-to-start 'reading café' project intends to promote reading for pleasure at home. A recent expansion of the school's initiative called BASE, which stands for 'brilliant additional school experiences', has resulted in more after-school and lunchtime clubs for all pupils. Furthermore, 100% of disadvantaged pupils now take part in at least one extra-curricular activity. These extra activities, coupled with improvements in teaching, are boosting progress and lifting standards. Disadvantaged pupils' levels of attendance at school, however, continue to give cause for concern.

Leaders have made sure that the school curriculum includes an appropriate range of subjects. The staff team now assess pupils' progress in all non-core subjects and use what they know about pupils' previous learning and experiences to plan new work. Pupils say that they enjoy the variety of lessons provided at school. Currently, pupils' knowledge of the wider world, including their knowledge of different cultures

and faiths, is rather limited.

Communication with parents has been strengthened. The school now makes use of social media platforms and more parents now see information that the school sends out.

On a matter of safety, parents' driving and car-parking behaviour near the school at the beginning and end of the school day is better than it used to be. During this inspection, the school bus was able to manoeuvre without having to steer around thoughtlessly parked cars and almost all vehicles followed the school's one-way system in and out of the car park.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

In all classes, teaching has improved and there is no weak teaching in the school. In fact, the quality of teaching in English is going from strength to strength. Pupils increasingly read for pleasure and in all classes there is a big focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and understanding of words. Their written work is also on the up and in several instances is inspired by interesting and imaginatively planned lessons that draw on the knowledge pupils have acquired in different subjects. In upper key stage 2, for example, pupils were prompted to write job applications to be a crew member on Ernest Shackleton's Endurance ship. Pupils drew on what they knew about the Trans-Antarctic Expedition, adding historical accuracy to their creative writing. Furthermore, the use of role play generated focused enthusiasm for the activity and helped the teacher to check on pupils' progress.

Phonics teaching is effective and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above national figures for the past two years. Inspectors' brief observations in phonics lessons identified confident teaching that was informed by accurate subject knowledge and understanding of what pupils needed to learn next. Pupils' ongoing progress in reading is greatly assisted by this consistent and capable phonics teaching.

On the other hand, pupils' spelling and aspects of presentation, while improving, remain a concern. These relative weaknesses continue to hold pupils back. In particular, staff allow pupils' spelling errors of key subject specific vocabulary to go unchallenged. This is most noticeable in mathematics, where pupils' misspelling of words and phrases such as 'bigger', 'number', 'more than' and 'greater than' are not routinely picked up and corrected by staff. In addition, some pupils regularly write digits the wrong way round. Again, they do not receive consistent guidance to correct this. Consequently, pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

With regard to presentation, in all classes pupils regularly practise their handwriting, with some noticeable improvements. In the younger classes, teaching is quick to pick up on careless or incorrect letter formation. That said, while staff make pupils

write out letters they have formed incorrectly they do not make sure they do it right. This means that pupils are practising their errors over and over again, which compounds rather than solves the problem.

Teaching in mathematics follows a consistent format across the school but the pitch of challenge is still not quite right. At its best, teaching is tuned in to where pupils are in their learning and builds securely on current levels of understanding. At its weakest, it still enables most pupils to make progress, but some mark time or get confused. Typically, the very brightest pupils are given work that is comfortably within their capabilities and the least able do not understand teachers' initial explanations and need extra support to help them get on with their work. Usually, teachers are aware of this problem and respond appropriately but there is still a degree of hit or miss with the school's new approach to teaching in this subject. Pupils, too, report that their work in mathematics is sometimes too hard or too easy.

Teaching in subjects such as science, physical education and humanities is well thought through, holds pupils' interest and develops subject-specific knowledge. Indeed, inspectors' brief observations of teaching in these subjects identified effective practice that made meaningful links with previous learning and the school's values.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

As has been the case for some time, pupils' behaviour in lessons, and on the playground, is not a problem. They follow the school's rules and respect one another. Indeed, during this inspection, an assembly about respecting differences was led well by staff and reinforced what pupils already understand and exemplify in their treatment of others.

Bullying or unpleasant behaviour is not accepted. Pupils know that using the phrase 'stop it now, please' is the right way to flag up any unkind behaviour and alert adults that they need help. Pupils and parents who expressed a view during this inspection said that they have no concerns about pupils' behaviour.

New outdoor play equipment has just been installed. Pupils are delighted with it, take turns in using it and treat it with respect. The school site is usually litter-free and pupils willingly take on responsibilities that help the school day to run smoothly.

Most pupils attend school regularly and the high levels of attendance of the majority keep the overall attendance figures close to average. Indeed, 50 pupils have not missed a day since the current term started. The headline attendance figure for disadvantaged pupils, however, is low. For the current term, so far, it stands at just over 80%. Within this, some pupils have even lower attendance, which, in most cases, is without good reason. This unnecessary absence from school hinders pupils' progress and creates bad habits.

Outcomes for pupils

As previously reported, academic standards in key stage 1, as measured by national tests and assessments, have risen. These higher standards are now feeding into key stage 2.

Outcomes for pupils who left the school at the end of key stage 2 in July 2018 were weak. Despite accelerated progress in recent times, some pupils just had too much ground to make up in a short space of time and did not do as well as they should have done.

For current pupils in key stage 2, the picture is more positive. Progress in reading and writing is much improved and work in pupils' English books indicates that the majority are working at age-related expectations. In mathematics, standards are also rising as teaching continues to improve. That said, in this subject progress can be erratic, with pupils making strong progress when work is pitched right, but slower progress when it is not. Currently, the most important development priority for the school is to ensure that mathematics teaching builds securely and logically on pupils' current levels of knowledge and understanding.

Additional support

The school continues to benefit from effective support from other schools and leaders within the multi-academy trust. Peer reviews and other activities organised by the trust provide leaders and staff with feedback and keep the trust informed about the impact of school leadership.