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Jennie White
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Dear Mrs White

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ludwell Community Primary School

Following my visit with Matt Middlemore, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 20 to 21 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2018.

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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not 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 Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Dyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2018.

- Urgently take action to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics, reading, writing and spelling by improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups by ensuring that:
 - the school's assessment systems are fit for purpose, understood, and consistently applied by all staff
 - all pupils make rapid progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2
 - pupils' weak reading skills do not hamper their ability to work independently or hinder their progress in mathematics
 - the progress and outcomes for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged rapidly improve
 - the most able pupils have the challenge they need to deepen and extend their thinking so they can reach their potential
 - pupils take a greater pride in the quality of their work.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - leaders embed clear, reliable systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - leaders provide dedicated training time and guidance for teaching assistants to improve the quality of support for pupils with SEND
 - subject leaders receive the training they need to be able to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively
 - governors hold the school and its leaders to account rigorously to ensure that pupils' outcomes improve rapidly.

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 first monitoring inspection on 20 November 2018 to 21 November 2018

Evidence

Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Discussions were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, staff, members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives of Wiltshire local authority. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the local authority's statement of action and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read. Inspectors spoke with a number of parents and took account of 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Context

The headteacher joined the school in September 2018, following the retirement of the previous post holder at the end of the summer term. Since the previous inspection, there has also been a number of changes in teaching staff. Consequently, three of the school's four classes are now being taught by teachers who were not in the school at the time of the previous section 5 inspection. The subject leaders for English and mathematics were both new to their roles in September 2018.

There has also been a number of changes to the governing body since the previous inspection. A new chair of the governing body was elected in September 2018.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher, governors and the local authority are unanimous in recognising that, following the section 5 inspection in January 2018, the pace of improvement was, initially, too slow. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher and new chair of the governing body in September 2018, the rate of improvement has accelerated considerably. As a result, leaders and those responsible for governance are now taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The headteacher demonstrates a steely determination to improve the school. She has quickly identified the appropriate priorities and, in these areas, there is evidence of actions having a demonstrable impact. For example, having identified weaknesses in the school's safeguarding procedures, the headteacher acted decisively to add additional rigour to the school's arrangements.

The school's improvement action plan (SIAP) is fit for purpose. Leaders have

ensured that the plan is linked closely to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The criteria for measuring the plan's success are detailed clearly, as are the procedures for monitoring the plan's effectiveness. Leaders and governors recognise, however, that their evaluations now need to focus less on whether an action has been carried out, and more on the impact that actions are having on pupils' outcomes. Additionally, as the majority of actions have now been completed, the plan needs revising so that it underpins the next stage of the school's continued development.

The headteacher has put in place a detailed programme of monitoring. This is providing information about the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes, but is limited by a lack of precision. For example, monitoring does not focus on the quality of provision or outcomes for different groups of pupils. This has resulted in leaders not identifying significant weaknesses in the support that staff provide for pupils with SEND.

There has been a considerable improvement in the effectiveness of subject leaders. Although new to their roles, the leaders of English and mathematics demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They have a developing understanding of their roles and have established processes through which they can influence the quality of teaching in other classes across the school.

Provision for pupils with SEND remains weak and, consequently, outcomes for this group of pupils remain inadequate. Although identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection, leaders have not yet provided teaching assistants with the training they require to provide effective support to pupils with SEND. Additionally, changes in leadership have resulted in a lack of clarity regarding the specific needs of individual pupils in the school. The headteacher, governors and local authority are aware that this remains an urgent issue for the school to address.

On behalf of the school, the local authority commissioned an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding. Leaders have responded quickly to its recommendations. For example, there is now a clear strategy in place and staff know which pupils in their classes are eligible for additional funding. Nonetheless, inspection evidence demonstrates that these pupils are not yet making the progress they require to address gaps in their learning.

As instructed at the previous inspection, the local authority commissioned an external review of governance. Since his appointment, the newly-appointed chair of the governing body has wasted no time in acting on its recommendations. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are carrying out their roles with increasing levels of confidence and effectiveness. Governors receive regular information about the school's performance but recognise that this needs to be presented in a format that allows them to better comprehend what it is telling them. This increased understanding will enable governors to hold the headteacher and staff to account with greater rigour.

Following the previous inspection, the school was subject to an academy order but has not yet become an academy. Leaders are working closely with a local trust, which has expressed a desire to sponsor the school in the new year. The headteacher and governors are very positive about this process and report that constructive meetings have been held between the school, the trust and the local authority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent. In some classes and subjects, the work in pupils' books demonstrates that teaching is meeting pupils' needs and leading to stronger progress. However, too often, teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan activities which build on what pupils can already do. This is leading to significant underachievement across the school, especially for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

Following her appointment, the headteacher quickly identified the need to ensure that, across the school, assessments of pupils' attainment were accurate and reliable. She has strengthened the school's assessment practices, and a scrutiny of assessment information, alongside examples of pupils' work, indicates that this work has been effective in ensuring the accuracy of assessments. This new baseline should now enable leaders to check pupils' progress, identify any areas of underachievement and hold staff to account with greater rigour.

Improvements in the teaching of writing are leading to pupils making stronger progress. Teachers have focused on developing pupils' basic skills, such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. This has strengthened the quality of pupils' writing and, as a result, greater numbers of pupils are now working within the expectations for their age. However, teachers are not providing sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils are not developing the technical skills that they require to write at greater depth. This is weakening the progress of the most able pupils.

The teaching of mathematics remains a concern. Across the school, there are inconsistencies in teachers' understanding of the mathematics curriculum and how to ensure that pupils develop a secure conceptual understanding. Where teaching is stronger, pupils get opportunities to address gaps in their understanding and to consolidate their learning. Pupils who have demonstrated that they have grasped a concept move onto activities which require them to reason and to apply their understanding in different contexts. However, across the school, teaching frequently fails to meet pupils' needs. Teachers do not provide lower-attaining pupils with work that is sufficiently matched to gaps in their understanding. Similarly, higher-attaining pupils are given work that is too easy and, often, contains too much guidance. Pupils are told what to do and how to do it. These activities do not provide pupils with sufficient levels of challenge and, consequently, outcomes for

these pupils remain too low.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The behaviour of pupils remains inconsistent.

Pupils, staff and parents all reported that the newly implemented behaviour policy has resulted in improved behaviour in lessons and stronger attitudes to learning. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils behave well in classes and, where teaching is strongest, pupils are fully engaged and active participants in their learning. However, where teaching is weak, or work is not sufficiently challenging, pupils become disengaged. In some cases, this results in pupils becoming easily distracted. However, mostly pupils simply lack enthusiasm for their learning and work compliantly through the tasks they are given. During the inspection, this was especially evident in mathematics.

At breaktimes and lunchtimes, weaknesses in the quality of supervision and a lack of clarity in expectation are resulting in behaviour that is, at times, overly boisterous. School leaders and staff recognise that, although there is a policy for pupils' behaviour during social times, this needs to be communicated more clearly and implemented with greater consistency.

Outcomes for pupils

Published assessment information for statutory assessments at the end of the 2017/18 academic year, highlighted significant underachievement for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. For example, in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' key stage 2 outcomes were well below those of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was broadly in line with the national average. This represents an improvement on the previous year. For children at the end of early years, the proportion achieving a good level of development was broadly in line with the national average. This is a significant improvement on previous years.

Although there are some improvements in the quality of teaching, most noticeably, in writing, outcomes for pupils currently in the school remain too variable. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Due to weaknesses in the provision for pupils with SEND, leaders recognise that outcomes for this group of pupils are still inadequate.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support to improve the school. They have a realistic and accurate view of the school's vulnerabilities and have provided appropriate levels of both challenge and support. For example, their support of the new headteacher has been particularly effective.

The local authority has played a significant part in the strengthening of the governing body, both in its commissioning of an external review and its introduction of the new chair of the governing body to the school. This has proved an instrumental part in the school's ongoing improvement journey.

The local authority has supported governors in identifying an appropriate academy trust to sponsor the school.