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Miss Wendy Robinson
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Robinson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Archbishop Courtenay Primary School

Following my visit 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 your team gave during the inspection and for the time they 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 June 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the

board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Aquila Diocese of Canterbury academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2017

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, by:
 - ensuring that the school follows its own procedures when maintaining a single central record and eradicates inconsistencies
 - clarifying the lines of accountability and embedding robust and reliable central record keeping of the actions taken to support vulnerable pupils
 - ensuring that the local governing body accurately oversees that all of the school's policies and procedures meet requirements
 - making sure that all staff are clear on safeguarding procedures
 - improving evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and using this to underpin sustained improvements to teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the wider curriculum is broad and balanced, meets pupils' needs and better prepares them for secondary school.
- Improve the rates of attendance for all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that they at least match national averages.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that all groups of pupils make strong progress over time, through leaders:
 - more thoroughly checking the quality of pupils' work across the curriculum and holding teachers to account for the progress they make
 - facilitating training to support key stage 2 teachers to improve their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science
 - supporting all teachers to develop their questioning and feedback to pupils in line with the best examples seen in the school
 - ensuring that teaching assistants have access to planning and information, enabling them to more effectively support pupils.
- Continue to improve outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing in key stage 1 and ensure that rapid improvements are made to these areas in key stage 2 by:
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning
 - improving teachers' planning and organisation of lessons, so that they take into account the needs of all pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively to check the progress that pupils make from their starting points and give them

feedback about how to improve their work.

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

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

Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 20 November 2018 to 21 November 2018

Evidence

I met with the deputy headteacher to review the progress being made and discuss the school's self-evaluation of its work, including the quality of teaching, and information about pupils' progress. I met the chief executive officer of the trust and with six members of the local governing body. I held telephone conversations with the chair of the local governing body and the school improvement partner. I had a discussion with two headteachers from within the trust who are currently supporting the school. I visited all classrooms, with the deputy headteacher, and evaluated work in pupils' books. I met with 'hub' leaders and looked at pupils' work with them. I met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed information about vulnerable pupils. I reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks, met the staff with a designated responsibility for safeguarding and attendance, and evaluated their work. I spoke to pupils around the school and heard some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

Context

Three teachers left the school at the end of the summer term. Some classes are currently being taught by unqualified or supply teachers. There are teacher vacancies to be filled for January 2019. Year 5 and Year 6 have been reorganised, so that Year 5 pupils are taught in two smaller, single-age classes and Year 6 pupils are taught in one class. The headteacher was absent at the time of this monitoring visit.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Improving the school has been all consuming for senior leaders. Maintaining a positive outlook while tackling poor teaching, battling weak outcomes, supporting inexperienced staff and caring for the most vulnerable members of the community has been tough. Throughout this challenging time, leaders have kept their focus on pupils' welfare and safety, and improving teaching. However, governors and leaders themselves have now recognised that they need additional support and capacity to make the rapid improvements necessary. This extra capacity from within the trust has ensured that the school has continued to take effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Senior leaders are now delegating more to hub leaders, who are each responsible for two year groups. These leaders have been given time and coaching to help them evaluate the effectiveness of planning and the quality of pupils' work in their hubs. Hub leaders are working together well, discussing good practice and taking responsibility for some leadership tasks. It is too early to see the impact of this additional leadership work by hub leaders on pupils' outcomes.

The revised pupil premium strategy identifies barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, and plans appropriate actions to address these. Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent appropriately to overcome identified barriers to learning. Despite the more targeted planning, disadvantaged pupils are not yet catching up with their peers because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. There are some emerging strengths in the curriculum. The focus on reading good-quality texts as a class is widening the range of books that pupils read. The cross-curricular approach to teaching topics through literacy encourages pupils to want to write for a variety of purposes. For example, older pupils have recently written poems of remembrance, while pupils in key stage 1 have written newspaper reports about the Great Fire of London.

Safeguarding continues to be effective. The record of recruitment checks has been updated to include the new staff that have joined the school this term. The safeguarding policy has also been revised to take account of the latest statutory guidance. Staff have received up-to-date training about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.

Strong partnership working with parents and carers and other agencies continues to help keep the most vulnerable pupils safe from harm. Leaders and those responsible for pupils' welfare dedicate a considerable amount of their time to this work.

Members of the local governing body know the school well. They are aware of what is working well and what needs to improve. Minutes from governors' meetings show that governors focus on the right things and challenge school leaders about the improvements needed.

Governors visit the school regularly to check for themselves how well improvements are being implemented by leaders. However, the current school improvement plan does not have measurable targets or milestones. Therefore, it is not clear how governors will monitor the impact of leaders' actions accurately.

The chair of the governing body has a very clear oversight of what is working well and what is currently causing leaders additional challenges. This is gained through the regular liaison with leaders and with the school improvement partner.

Governors are quick to recognise leaders' hard work to make the necessary improvements and are considerate of their well-being and workload. However, this needs to be finely balanced with ensuring that teaching and outcomes improve quickly enough for pupils.

Governors have worked with the trust to ensure that additional support for the school best meets the needs of the school's pupils. The trust, governors and leaders have realigned their commitment to working together to improve the school quickly.

The trust's chief executive officer (CEO) has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The trust, through the CEO, has put in place a

programme of additional support from other trust headteachers to improve the capacity of leaders. The CEO coordinates the work of other trust headteachers and liaises with the school improvement partner about their effectiveness and emerging impact. This additional support for the school has been well planned and is now coordinated. Other trust headteachers who are now supporting the school have the relevant expertise to add capacity to the school improvement journey.

The school improvement partner has an impartial and highly evaluative view of the school. She is very aware of the magnitude of the task ahead for leaders to ensure that the school no longer requires special measures. Following each of her visits, she reports on improvements and challenges to the CEO and chair of the governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The biggest vulnerability to the school's rapid improvement is the frequent changes in teaching staff and the ability to recruit highly effective, permanent replacement teachers. While there are clear improvements to teaching in some parts of the school, there is still far too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching.

Where teaching is strongest, it is highly engaging. Work is appropriately pitched to meet the needs of pupils and additional adults are used well to support learning. Pupils work well together with their peers and talk about their learning. For example, older pupils were observed using appropriate mathematical vocabulary to demonstrate their reasoning when solving mathematical problems involving fractions.

Not all teachers have the same high expectations. Where teachers have lower expectations, the quality and presentation of pupils' work are not as strong. In early years, there are well-established learning routines, and as a result, children behave well. Children are confident to talk about their learning.

Relationships with adults are very positive. Adults model expectations and vocabulary well, and this helps children to develop their language. However, adults do not routinely expect children to talk in full sentences.

Phonics is taught daily in key stage 1 using an agreed programme. However, some adults bring their own interpretation and strategies to their groups. This gives pupils an inconsistent approach to the teaching of early reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Attendance is improving slowly because of the school's efforts to engage and challenge parents. Use of innovative communication including 'emoji texts' has prompted parents to take more responsibility. However, attendance remains below the national average. Leaders have resolved to take further action to challenge

parents of pupils who do not attend frequently enough, including by issuing penalty notices.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school was positive during the inspection visit. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are only ever off-task if the work is too easy or uninteresting. Pupils take pride in their school and are courteous to visitors. They take on a growing range of responsibilities around the school such as those of head boy and head girl, school councillors and mentors.

Leaders have used their powers of exclusion appropriately to tackle some isolated examples of extremely poor behaviour. School leaders are working with other agencies to ensure that the needs of all pupils who have additional needs relating to their behaviour are being fully met.

Outcomes for pupils

The majority of children join early years with skills and knowledge below those found typically for their age. Many children make substantial progress through the Reception Year so that more than half achieve a good level of development.

School assessment information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils throughout the school are making progress in writing and mathematics. However, for too many pupils in key stage 2, the progress is not yet strong enough to overcome previous weak teaching and to catch up with national expectations.

Strong performance in the phonics screening check in 2017 was not sustained in 2018 due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 show that despite some small improvements, attainment continues to be low compared with national averages.

Pupils who left the school in July 2018 to start secondary school made poor progress in reading and mathematics during their time in key stage 2 at the school. These pupils had made stronger progress in Year 6 due to more effective teaching. Despite this, only a third of them were well prepared academically for secondary school because they had achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Additional funding has not been used effectively in the past to help disadvantaged pupils to catch up. However, the funding is currently being used appropriately because of more stringent monitoring by governors.