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19 December 2018

Julie Mantell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Mantell

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Paternoster School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 to 28 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 March 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 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 Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2018.**

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that safeguarding records are clear about how actions taken keep pupils safe
  - setting clear priorities for improvement, which are carefully and regularly monitored and evaluated for impact by leaders, including governors
  - strengthening governance to ensure that governors carry out their roles and responsibilities to swiftly improve the quality of education pupils receive
  - leaders implementing a planned cycle of monitoring to check that actions taken are making a difference to pupils' learning and development
  - ensuring that leaders' checking of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment includes a clear focus on pupils' progress, including that of groups of pupils
  - ensuring that checks to monitor what pupils know, can do and understand are securely in place and evaluated by leaders to ensure that they are accurate
  - providing high-quality training for subject coordinators and time in order for them to carry out their roles effectively
  - providing staff with high-quality guidance and support to improve their practice
  - taking action to improve staff morale and reduce staff absence.
- Quickly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve to enable them to make the best possible progress
  - teachers accurately assess what pupils can and cannot do in order to inform planning so that learning precisely meets the needs of all pupils
  - teachers plan work which motivates, excites, challenges and enables pupils to concentrate and achieve well
  - teachers' subject knowledge is secure across all subjects, especially in the teaching of phonics.

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 school's use of pupil premium funding should be

undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 27 November 2018 to 28 November 2018**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed learning in all classrooms with the headteacher and scrutinised pupils' work. The inspector met with pupil representatives from the school council. He met with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and the headteacher and assistant headteacher of Milestone School. The inspector scrutinised the school's plans and documents.

### **Context**

Following the previous inspection, the headteacher returned to the school full-time but has now resigned and will leave in December 2018. An interim head of education has been appointed from January 2019. There have been changes to teaching staff and there are three new teachers at the school. There is a new chair of the governing body. Staff from Milestone School, Gloucester have been supporting Paternoster. Although yet to be formally approved, Paternoster will join with Milestone School in spring or summer 2019. In September 2018, the school moved into its new buildings.

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

Leaders have taken important steps to establish the foundations for improvement for the school. They have maintained the school's work during a period of upheaval due to substantial building work and sadness due to bereavements within the school community. The current headteacher is working hard to make improvements before she leaves at the end of 2018. Governors recognise that there is still a great deal to do but believe that things will improve. They keep the pupils' aspirations and the quality of education at the centre of their work. The local authority has played an important role in developing good action plans, monitoring the school's work and intervening when necessary. They know that there is an urgent need for the improvements required.

The headteacher's return to work full-time is helping to secure more rapid improvement. By clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all leaders, she has ensured that individuals are clear about leading improvement priorities. She is beginning to hold leaders to account for the progress of these improvements. Leaders have developed assessment systems and have improved the school's approach to developing phonics. There is better use of pupil premium. There are early signs that teachers are more confident in assessing pupils' work and that approaches to early reading are improving. The accountability of leaders for the speed and quality of implementation, ongoing review and the impact of these changes on pupils' learning is less well developed. This continues to be a key focus

for leaders and governors going forward, while maintaining the momentum of improvement.

The review of governance, carried out soon after the inspection of the school, highlighted significant weaknesses in the quality of the governing body's actions. In particular, governors failed to challenge leaders to halt the school's decline. With local authority support, the governors have responded appropriately to the recommendations of the review. The new chair of the governing body has a strong understanding of education and the strengths and weaknesses of the school. An experienced governor from another school setting adds capacity to the board. Together, with existing governors and through the local authority project group, they are holding the school to account much more effectively through systematic reviews of action plans. Monthly progress monitoring meetings are helping school leaders to stay focused on securing rapid improvement. The governing body is clear that the impending leadership and school status changes do not compromise the start made to securing improvement. Governors are still not fully confident in challenging leaders. However, it is very clear that they are reflective, willing to learn and determined. As they are learning more about the school and its needs, they are becoming much more directive and clear about their expectations for its improvement.

The review of how the school uses pupil premium has led to a distinct improvement in the allocation and management of this funding. The leader, who has recently taken on the responsibility for this area, has carried out a careful analysis of barriers to pupils' learning, alongside an analysis of the effectiveness of the school's current approaches. As a result, school leaders have a greater understanding of what is working and why, as well as further actions needed. Leaders have briefed governors fully. Good plans are in place to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. School leaders and governors are clear about the need to monitor carefully and evaluate precisely the impact of this work.

Although leaders monitor the quality of teaching in lessons and check books, there is too much focus on the implementation of the school's agreed procedures, for example marking and feedback. There is not enough focus on checking what difference these activities are making to pupils' learning. This means that, although the school's evidence suggests improvements, leaders' view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is far too generous. The recording of recommendations for further improvement and subsequent follow up by leaders is weak and is having limited impact on improving teaching.

A new designated lead has maintained the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school, and this means that the headteacher now has more capacity to tackle other issues. Leaders have addressed the concerns in the previous report about adequacy of staffing and the accuracy of record-keeping. Training of staff is up to date and practices in relation to safer recruitment are fully in place.

There is a renewed positivity in the school. Staff talk about how much they like working at the school, and how, particularly since September, staff are pulling together to improve the school. Subject leaders are now becoming more effective in their role. Leaders have created a culture of openness, and they inform staff of actions needed. As a result, meetings are more effective. In a recent questionnaire, commissioned by governors, there is an increasing proportion of satisfied parents and carers who say their children are happy and safe.

The school has welcomed the advice from the support school, and its specialist expertise has been beneficial. This collaborative work to tackle the most significant areas in need of improvement has set a sound foundation for the future. Good plans are in place for a leader from the support school to take the role of head of education when the substantive headteacher leaves at Christmas 2018. Appropriate plans are in place for a smooth handover. This leadership will continue as the school moves through the process of becoming an academy. Further staffing changes could compromise the current trajectory of improvement.

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

The quality of teaching and assessment remains too variable in the school and, therefore, pupils' learning is inconsistent and too many pupils do not make sufficient progress. Teachers use excuses about a pupil's special educational needs or lack of experience for the lack of effective learning.

Leaders have strengthened the school's approach to planning, marking and feedback, communication passports and personal intervention plans. As a result, these approaches are more deeply embedded than at the time of the previous inspection. However, despite the actions taken by school leaders, there is much more to do to ensure that planned actions have sufficient impact. Too frequently, planned activities do not build on pupils' prior learning and are insufficiently tailored to pupils' specific needs. Some classes have a clear routine, and staff work effectively as a team. In these cases, learning engages pupils purposefully in group and individual work. However, elsewhere, teachers waste too much time on confused activities which distract pupils from focused learning.

Teachers have taken important steps to improve the way they assess pupils' work. They use the results to help pupils achieve as well as they can. There is a new system in place to capture pupils' progress in communication, reading, writing and number. Teachers have worked together to ensure that their assessments of pupils' work are more accurate. Good plans are in place to capture the first round of new assessments in December. These will give leaders and teachers important information about pupils' progress over time and how best to develop more effective teaching.

The use of assessment in lessons is less well developed. Too frequently, adults do not realise that they are boring and confusing pupils who are going through the

motions of an activity with limited learning. At times, adults do not respond appropriately to pupils' verbal and non-verbal communication. They do not adapt activities so that pupils can engage and learn.

The activities planned by teachers do not ensure that pupils are making good progress over time. They are not well matched to the prior learning of pupils or the priorities or aspirations of the young person. Work in books too frequently records disjointed activities without a clear thread of pupils building on what they can do and then developing new knowledge and skills.

Teachers and teaching assistants are more confident in the development of early reading, including phonics. Teachers have assessed each pupil's current reading level. They are tailoring their approaches to pupils' needs, appreciating that skills may have developed in an atypical way. Teachers and teaching assistants are becoming more effective in helping pupils to develop a systematic way of approaching and decoding words.

Leaders and governors recognise that there is still a great deal of work to do to ensure that high expectations of teaching become embedded throughout the school.

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

Warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident throughout the school. Pupils who have very different needs work and play alongside each other cooperatively. Pupils in different parts of the school know each other well as they might travel together or share different activities. They become friends, learn to understand and accept each other's needs and generally work well together.

In general, staff manage pupils' distress, lack of confidence or challenging behaviour in a supportive way. However, there is a lack of detailed assessment of why a pupil might be behaving in a certain way. Specific, targeted work to improve pupils' social skills are not being developed systematically.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Monitoring by leaders suggests that pupils are making better progress than at the previous inspection. This is most evident in pupils' development in communication, reading, writing and number, where pupils are developing skills related to the expectations of the national curriculum. However, progress in lessons and in books remains too variable. This is because teachers are not adapting activities to ensure they meet pupils' needs. They are not building on prior learning effectively. Some teaching staff do not have high expectations of what pupils should achieve.

In classes where the approach to early reading has improved, pupils are making better progress, identifying early sounds and using techniques to decode words.



They are more confident in writing unaided and trying to read simple texts.

### **External support**

The local authority supported the school quickly and effectively following the previous inspection. The meetings to check ongoing progress are effective and mean that officers hold school leaders to account well. The challenge to school leaders from local authority officers is a good model to help governors develop their skills to secure more rapid improvement. The local authority commissioned reviews on governance, pupil premium, safeguarding and teaching and learning. The best of the reviews gives clear recommendations for the future, such as the work to improve governance and the use of pupil premium. They are less effective when judgements are vague. For example, in the evaluation of teaching and learning, there is too much description and not enough evaluation of impact.

The work of the support school has had a noticeable impact in areas such as training teachers in phonics. School leaders appreciate the support from colleagues whom they know well and respect. As they take more direct responsibility for Paternoster, leaders from the support school are very clear about next actions needed and the urgency required.