

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 March 2019

Mr William Greenwood
Headteacher
Tuffley Primary School
Evenlode Road
Tuffley
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL4 0JY

Dear Mr Greenwood

Special measures monitoring inspection of Tuffley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13–14 February 2019, 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 May 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 plans are fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the interim 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

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently improve teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects and key stages, and therefore improve outcomes, by:
 - improving the precision of assessment so that teachers understand pupils' starting points and plan challenging work that is matched to pupils' ages and abilities
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge so that they know exactly what pupils should be learning in subjects
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning routinely helps them to probe pupils' understanding so they know when to adapt teaching to move pupils' learning on
 - making sure that additional teaching, particularly for middle-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is sharply focused on helping pupils' progress accelerate so that they catch up
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are well deployed consistently to challenge and support pupils and help them to achieve well.
- Rapidly improve leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that development plans are monitored and evaluated effectively so that they have a positive impact
 - providing all leaders and teachers with high-quality training that leaders evaluate to ensure that it is having a positive impact
 - improving leaders' monitoring of teaching, so that they hold teachers to account more effectively for ensuring that pupils make strong progress
 - developing a rich and engaging curriculum in which teaching consistently supports pupils to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge
 - ensuring that the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND has a positive impact
 - improving governors' understanding of how to check the school's effectiveness, so that they can support and challenge leaders and hold them to account routinely
 - rectifying administration errors in safeguarding documents, so that policies and procedures are clear to staff.

- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - continuing to improve the attendance of pupils, particularly pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that leaders make rapid and sustained improvements to teaching that support pupils' personal development and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Improve the early years, by:
 - developing the role of the early years leader and improving the monitoring of children's progress so that leaders know when to take action to improve teaching
 - improving the accuracy of assessment so that teachers plan learning that effectively meets children's needs and develops children's knowledge and skills across all areas of learning
 - improving the resources in the indoor and outdoor environment, so that children are able to access stimulating activities that promote their curiosity and sustain their interest regularly
 - ensuring that the teaching of phonics supports children's fluency in reading and writing.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of pupil premium funding have not been recommended because the school has commissioned these already.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13–14 February 2019

Evidence

During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. He met with a representative of the local authority, the interim chair of the governing body and with one other governor. The lead inspector observed children's and pupils' learning in early years and key stages 1 and 2. He spoke with many pupils informally around the school. He scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, project group meetings, the school's action plans and records relating to safeguarding.

Context

The chair of the governing body left the school a few days before the school was placed in special measures in May 2018. The local authority project group, which had already been established at that time, coordinates support for the school and monitors improvements. Its first action after the inspection was to appoint an interim chair of the governing body.

Senior leaders' and middle leaders' roles were restructured in September 2018. Middle leaders now take responsibility for particular subjects in the curriculum. Since September 2018, one teacher and five teaching assistants have left the school.

The school has received an academy order. It is seeking to become a sponsored academy. However, it currently does not have a prospective sponsor.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders have introduced more effective checks on the quality of teachers' work. They now have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching across the school. They demonstrate greater urgency to take action when underperformance is identified.

Leaders' roles have been restructured. Senior leaders and middle leaders have clearly defined roles and so they are being held accountable for the impact of their work more closely. Senior leaders meet regularly with middle leaders and this is improving communication within the school. Staff believe that senior leaders' communication with them is improving, but is still not effective enough. For example, some staff feel that too many initiatives have been introduced too quickly.

Senior leaders have taken on external support and advice readily. They have been quick to develop good relationships with several local schools and organisations. They work closely with the local authority project group and so the timeframe for improvement set out in the statement of action is being adhered to.

Teachers have received considerable training in a range of skills in a short space of time. Although they describe this as a steep learning curve, staff are keen to make the necessary improvements.

Middle leaders are enthusiastic about developing teachers' skills in their subject areas. They are becoming increasingly confident in using the school's system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress. Consequently, they are raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders at all levels are ensuring that teachers understand what needs to be taught, and so teaching is covering the content of the national curriculum more comprehensively than previously.

Senior leaders have established plans to improve pupils' progress in phonics, writing and mathematics. While these plans are fit for purpose, they are not coordinated effectively enough. For example, strategies for raising the expectations for middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils are not threaded through the individual plans. The school's strategy for using pupil premium funding to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not well developed. It is not embedded in leaders' plans across the school and is not well understood by teachers.

The school's efforts to achieve greater contact with parents and carers have had limited success. Senior leaders recognise the importance of increasing parents' involvement in their child's learning.

The project group is providing effective challenge and support to senior leaders. It is chaired by a representative of the local authority. It is systematically checking that actions are being taken and improvements are being made. The project group has played an important part in making sure that the school receives the external support it needs. However, it has not placed enough emphasis on recruiting and training new governors. The governing body is not yet effective enough. Governors are passionate about the school and committed to improving it, but they do not yet have the necessary skills to challenge senior leaders effectively.

Senior leaders have introduced a new system for recording and communicating concerns about pupils' welfare. They have ensured that teachers receive suitable training, and as a result, all staff are clear about the procedures they should follow if they have concerns. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers have received training on aspects of teaching writing and mathematics. As a result, their expertise in these essential areas has improved. Their ability to accurately assess standards of work is growing because they are now comparing their judgements about pupils' work with those of teachers from other schools. Teachers are making better use of these assessments to plan learning for their classes. However, they are not yet adept at altering their plans within lessons as a

result of pupils' response to the work they are doing.

Teachers are being challenged by senior leaders to reflect more systematically on their work. Their planning is improving, and they are thinking carefully about the questions they ask pupils. Teachers show great commitment to the school and to the pupils. However, they are not yet helping the most able pupils achieve high standards.

Senior leaders' strategy to improve the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils is not being communicated effectively throughout the school. These pupils have underachieved in the past. Although current pupils are making better progress, it is still not good enough.

The school employs a large number of teaching assistants. In the past, they have not been given effective training or direction and so their impact on pupils' learning has not been strong. Training in a range of aspects of teaching is now being provided and so the quality of their work is improving. In particular, teaching assistants' understanding of phonics teaching in early years and Year 1 has improved. This is contributing to pupils' better progress in phonics.

Senior leaders check regularly on the quality of additional teaching provided for pupils who need extra help to catch up. This additional teaching is becoming more effective as a result of the greater scrutiny.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Teachers are using a new personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are responding well to this new programme. Nevertheless, it is at an early stage of development and has not yet been linked effectively to other aspects of the school's work, for example the school's efforts to encourage pupils to take pride in their work and efforts to promote a restorative approach to improve relationships between pupils.

Senior leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. They have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Even so, a significant minority of pupils do not behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders' higher expectations of pupils' behaviour have led to an increase in the number of pupils who have been excluded. Although the rate of exclusions has recently begun to fall, pupils' conduct is still not good enough.

The rate of pupils' attendance has fallen this year and is currently a little below the national average. Despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains above average. Senior leaders and other staff pay close attention to the welfare of pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly. However, this has not yet had enough effect on improving the rate of pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Key stage 2 pupils' progress in reading and writing was in line with the national average in 2018. This is an improvement compared with the previous two years. Teachers are taking a new approach to the teaching of writing. Pupils are developing their ideas before they write and so they are finding it easier to construct longer pieces of writing.

Pupils' reading skills have not been developed well in the past. Many pupils in key stage 2 have weaker reading skills than could be expected for their age because they were not taught well in key stage 1. Pupils currently in key stage 1 are making better progress in reading. A higher proportion of these pupils are on track to attain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check this year than in previous years.

Many younger pupils do not hold their pencil correctly when writing. They do not form letters accurately and this leads to poor handwriting. Teachers do not take a consistent approach to teaching handwriting and so the weakness continues.

Pupils' progress in mathematics was well below average in 2017 and declined further in 2018. Mathematics teaching had not kept pace with the requirements of the national curriculum. Pupils had not been taught the skills of reasoning and application of mathematics and so their attainment at the end of Year 6 was well below their capabilities. As a result of the training teachers have received, mathematics teaching is now more effective in helping pupils develop these skills.

As a result of their lack of progress in mathematics, very few Year 6 pupils attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018. In particular, disadvantaged pupils attained well below other pupils nationally. The school's assessment information shows that current pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many more Year 6 pupils are likely to reach the expected standard in all three subjects by the end of this academic year.

Pupils in the communication and interaction centre all have education, health and care (EHC) plans. These pupils are making good progress to develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with SEND in the main school are making better progress than last year, particularly in mathematics. Improved leadership and better training for teaching assistants are contributing to improved provision for these pupils.

Early years provision

Strong leadership in early years is leading to improved outcomes for children. Phonics teaching is structured well. Teaching assistants' skills have improved following the training they have received. Children are making strong progress in phonics from their starting points.

Teachers' and teaching assistants' ability to assess children's skills in the different areas of their learning are improving. Staff are using a new system for recording these skills. Although only recently introduced, this system is helping staff to encourage children to choose activities that will help them learn most effectively, based on the skills they already have. As a result of these improvements, and teachers' higher expectations of what children can achieve, a higher proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

Staff have successfully reorganised the Reception classroom. The space is used more effectively. Children are responding well to having areas of the classroom set aside for different activities. However, the outdoor space remains drab and uninviting for children.

Many children start school with weak communication skills. Senior leaders are aware of children's needs. In response, they are planning an initiative to help children develop their speaking skills, but this has not yet begun.

External support

The local authority stepped up its support for the school after it was placed in special measures. The project group, which was originally set up in November 2017, was strengthened and relaunched. This group provides significant support and challenge to senior leaders. It coordinates the provision of training and advice from several departments of the local authority.

At the time of the inspection, the governing body did not have a chair. The first action of the project group was to appoint an interim chair of governors and so establish leadership for the governing body. Although governance remains weak, individual governors are taking up training opportunities and there are signs that the training is helping them have a greater understanding of their roles.

The school was receiving support from Abbeymead School before the inspection in May 2018. This support is continuing. Teachers from Abbeymead School are helping teachers at Tuffley to check that the standard of pupils' work is assessed accurately. Teachers are sharing their plans in several curriculum areas. This collaborative work is making a positive contribution to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. The headteacher of Abbeymead School is a member of the project group.

The headteacher of Prestbury St Mary's School is supporting senior leaders by providing advice about the development of mathematics teaching. This is part of a

project run by a local network of mathematics specialists. Recently, his support for senior leaders has been increased significantly and has been extended to include advice about the management of pupils' behaviour.

In September 2018, staff from Watermoor Primary School in Cirencester began to provide guidance to teachers about the teaching of writing. Senior leaders have allocated a significant amount of time to this work in training days and staff meetings. Many teachers report that this training has been effective in improving their skills. This support is continuing.

Teachers have received training about phonics teaching from external consultants. This training has resulted in the successful introduction of a new, more structured and effective approach to developing pupils' early reading skills.