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Dear Mrs Vanessa Ridler

Special measures monitoring inspection of Weston Shore Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 19–20 March 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 December 2017.

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 Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dylan Davies
Her Majesty’s Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 so that they are good, by:
 - raising expectations of the standards that pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teaching makes good use of assessment to match learning activities well to pupils' different needs, including challenging the most able pupils so that they exceed the expectations for their age
 - making sure that teaching addresses pupils' misconceptions effectively
 - ensuring that the support teaching assistants provide has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Improve behaviour, welfare and personal development by:
 - using a consistent approach to promoting good behaviour and self-discipline among pupils
 - ensuring that pupils attend school regularly, in particular reducing significantly the proportion of pupils that miss school frequently
 - providing pupils with rich opportunities that promote effectively their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Improve leadership at all levels by:
 - ensuring that governors meet their statutory responsibilities
 - making sure that leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness
 - ensuring that performance management and appraisal systems are put into place, and are rigorous for all staff members
 - assessing and analysing outcomes for different groups of pupils, tracking their progress and taking prompt action to ensure support for those who are falling behind, including pupils who are disadvantaged and the most able
 - overseeing the implementation of an effective, rich, broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils.

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.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 March 2019 to 20 March 2019

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The inspector observed all classes jointly with the headteacher. The inspector reviewed pupils' work in books during lessons and separately with subject leaders. I spoke to pupils informally and in lessons. I also heard pupils read. The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face informal discussions before school. During the inspection, I checked school records and documentation relating to safeguarding procedures and the school's procedures for recruiting staff safely. I reviewed sets of governors' meeting minutes and school-improvement reports written by local authority representatives. I met with the local authority school improvement partner working with the school. I met with the chair of governors and another governor.

Context

School leadership has changed since the last inspection. You have been in post as acting headteacher since May 2018. Several changes in staff have also occurred since May 2018, including new teaching appointments, as well as changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities in two-year groups. The school is now fully staffed with permanent appointments.

Since the previous inspection, the school has been working towards academy status. This process is not yet complete. The school is currently aligned with a preferred academy sponsor. Leaders believe academy status and their membership of a multi-academy trust will be secured by Summer 2019.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since your appointment in May 2018, you have taken a reasoned and thoughtful approach to improving the school. You have rightly focused on improving the standards of teaching and learning and ensuring that all staff are aware of and meet your high expectations. Working with staff has taken a considerable amount of your leadership time. As a result, you are confident that you have the right people in the correct roles to support further improvements. Standards of teaching across the school are improving, most notably in Year 2. There remains work to do to ensure that teaching improves in other year groups at a similar rate.

You accurately describe the impact of the work that you and your team have done to address some of the areas to improve identified at the previous Ofsted inspection. You have made more headway in some areas than others. You are open and honest about the aspects that you know still need considerable work to reach your expectations. Moreover, you are leading with steadfast determination, wisely using the additional support that you receive from the local authority and your

potential sponsor to achieve your plans effectively. For example, your introduction of a new phonics scheme, highlighted by your external support advisor, has been very effective and is securing stronger outcomes for pupils in the phonics screening check.

Your staff value the professional development opportunities that they receive. Regular visits by you and your staff to other schools, to share ideas and learn new school improvement strategies, effectively support you and your middle leaders. Consequently, middle leaders' work to improve the English and mathematics curriculum is becoming more effective and quickly improving standards in both of these areas of the school. You have prioritised improving mathematics and English. Although your work to develop pupils' creative skills through art and design is very evident through the colourful displays of pupils' work, proudly shared around the school, the wider curriculum provision remains underdeveloped.

You have raised your expectations of staff further by implementing performance management targets linked to school improvement objectives. As a result, you are able to hold staff to account for their roles and the impact of their work.

Leaders have maintained the effective safeguarding systems in place across the school. Regular checks by governors ensure that the systems for keeping children safe remain effective. You ensure that you follow the correct procedures to recruit appropriate staff to school. You work effectively and in a timely manner to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported by other agencies. You work thoughtfully to provide extra support to vulnerable pupils and families. You and your staff are very aware of the personal development and welfare needs of your pupils. Pupils are well cared for and feel happy and safe in school.

Leaders' work to improve academic standards have been most effective in Year 2. Standards in the early years and Year 1 need further development. You and your early years staff have comprehensive plans in place to further improve this area quickly. Early years staff are knowledgeable and skilled. However, the standards in the early years are not as strong as at the previous inspection. You are working closely with staff to secure more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning opportunities that pupils in Year 1 receive.

Leaders and governors have not undertaken an independent review of the pupil premium provision. An internal review by the headteacher and other leaders highlighted actions to improve this provision. Leaders have used this information well to support their work to improve teaching and learning for all pupils. However, the lack of the external review has meant that leaders' analyses of their work to improve the provision for disadvantaged pupils does not effectively show how much impact has been made on the provision for disadvantaged pupils. More so, leaders are not analysing which teaching and learning strategies that they use are the most effective at improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Most parents are happy with the education that their children now receive. One parent reflected others' views when they said that they were happy with how their child was achieving in school, particularly with their improved reading skills. However, some parents feel that your methods of communication between school and home could be improved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment are improving across the school. There is now a consistent expectation for the planning of learning and the assessing of what pupils know and understand. However, all teaching is not yet secure enough to ensure that this approach is always used to best effect. As a result, teaching does not always match the needs of all pupils well enough for them to make the progress of which they are capable. Boys' progress is not consistently evident across the school because their needs are not properly addressed.

The work of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning is becoming more effective. You are training your teaching assistants to become more skilled and knowledgeable than previously. As a result, some very effective activities to develop pupils' social and emotional behaviours are strongly led by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants often question pupils well to help them learn and understand more. However, this area of the school's provision remains too variable. Pupils are not always challenged enough to make enough progress through the extra support that they receive.

Pupils follow their teachers' high expectations for good behaviour very well in Year 2. They engage quickly and purposefully in well-planned and challenging activities. Consequently, pupils in Year 2 are making better progress in mathematics and English, compared to recent years. Most-able pupils are challenged well in Year 2 because helpful, specific group work for these pupils gives them the extra challenge they need to secure rapid progress. However, there remains more to do so that all pupils achieve the progress of which they are capable by the end of key stage 1.

Teaching in Year 1 and the early years is improving. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy learning through a range of different mathematical and English based activities. Most pupils confidently use the resources provided by staff to quickly engage with learning. Nevertheless, some boys lose their focus very quickly and begin to use the resources inappropriately and disengage from learning. Staff are not always quick to challenge these behaviours and these disengaged pupils do not make enough progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving quickly. Your review of the school behaviour policy, coinciding with your drive to ensure that all staff ensure that high expectations for good behaviour are effectively changing the culture and ethos of

the school. Pupils move respectfully around the school. They are happy and confident and play together well at play times. 'Pupil playtime buddies' take their roles of monitoring the behaviour of pupils in the playground very seriously. They are proud to wear their high-visibility vests indicating their responsibilities. Pupils eat together properly at lunchtimes. They are very well mannered, lining up for their food quietly and taking their turns correctly. They tidy up their places promptly and are very polite to the staff serving their food. The recently introduced 'golden table' that pupils sit at weekly, based on their good behaviour at lunchtime, is very much liked by pupils.

There is still more work needed to ensure that all classrooms are calm and purposeful places of learning. Some pupils quickly go off task when the activities they are given are not well considered. You and your leaders are aware of this.

Your work with pupils and families who do not attend school regularly is successful. You have recently introduced effective strategies to improve pupils' punctuality to school. Attendance is now in line with national average for primary schools. You work closely with the few pupils and their families with poor attendance to support them quickly into school.

Your work to develop pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is improving. You have introduced more trips and visits to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils visit the Titanic Museum and local churches. Pupils learn about different cultures. For example, they study Chinese New Year and the dragon dance and the Hindu celebration of Diwali. This work is at the early stages of development.

Outcomes for pupils

Working closely with some of your preferred academy sponsor trust schools and other local schools you have introduced a regular cycle of meetings with their staff, to verify the standards of pupils' work. The school's current information about how well pupils are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics shows a much stronger picture of pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 1, compared to outcomes in recent years. Pupils' work in books shows strong evidence of improving outcomes for pupils, particularly in Year 2. Pupils' outcomes in the phonics screening check in 2018 were better than in recent years and above the national average. Pupils continue to achieve well in phonics. Alongside improved phonics outcomes, pupils' writing skills are also improving. You have plans in place to work with local schools to improve boys' writing skills further.

Your work with staff is building pupils' mathematical skills and deepening their mathematical knowledge. However, your work to improve pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems and share their reasons for the methods used to solve the problem is at an early stage of development.

Your work to develop the systems you have in place to record and analyse how well pupils are achieving in English and mathematics is effective. You can confidently articulate the standards that Year 2 are likely to achieve in their reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. You ensure that you check the accuracy of these figures regularly. However, the systems that you have in place do not help you identify the impact of your work on the outcomes for disadvantaged and other vulnerable pupils clearly.

External support

You take the advice and support offered to yourself and your staff seriously. You have the confidence to decide which advice is best to help you improve the school further. The recommendations and guidance that you have received, from both the local authority and your preferred academy sponsor, have been effective in supporting your school improvement work.