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Mrs G De N'Yeurt
Acting Headteacher
May Park Primary School
Coombe Road
Eastville
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Dear Mrs De N'Yeurt

Special measures monitoring inspection of May Park Primary School

Following my visit with Susan Ivermee, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10 to 11 July 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 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 April 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 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 the City of Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - introducing a more rigorous approach to tackling the school’s weaknesses and ensuring that pupils make strong progress
 - ensuring that leaders use assessment information to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that governors have the information they need to challenge leaders effectively about pupils’ progress
 - providing teachers with effective professional development and challenge to improve their practice
 - rigorously analysing incidents of challenging behaviour to reduce risk of future occurrences.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that learning activities are well matched to the needs of pupils
 - ensuring that pupils are provided with interesting activities that challenge them to think deeply and prepare them well for the next stage in their education.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - urgently improving the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics so that more pupils achieve the expectations for their ages
 - ensuring that more pupils, including the most able pupils, achieve higher standards in all year groups
 - improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years so that children make rapid progress and are well prepared for Year 1
 - ensuring that phonics is taught effectively
 - ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils have the resources and guidance they need to make good progress.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - raising expectations of behaviour in lessons and across the school
 - ensuring that there are robust systems in place to analyse and learn from behaviour incidents in order to reduce their frequency.
- Improve attendance so that it shows sustained improvement and compares more

favourably with the national average.

- 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 10 July 2019 to 11 July 2019

Evidence

During this inspection, we conducted visits to observe pupils' learning in all classes and reviewed pupils' work in books jointly with the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher. We scrutinised a range of documents. Meetings were held with the assistant headteacher responsible for pastoral support and the acting assistant headteacher, who is the special educational needs coordinator and the person responsible for disadvantaged pupils. I held a meeting with a selection of pupils during the inspection and we spoke with pupils during social times and in lessons. I held a discussion with two governors from the interim executive board (IEB) and an officer from the local authority. Additionally, I met with two representatives from Excalibur Academies Trust (the trust), the trust's proposed headteacher, who is charged with leading the school from September, and the head of school improvement. Furthermore, we spoke with a number of parents and carers at the start of the school day.

Context

Since the inspection in April 2018, a significant number of staff have left the school, including the headteacher. The acting headteacher took up her post a few days after the previous inspection. The senior leadership team has been restructured, with a newly appointed assistant and deputy headteacher. It is proposed that the acting headteacher will revert back to her deputy headteacher role from September 2019. There are a further five teachers due to join the school from September 2019. An IEB was established to replace the governing body in April 2018, following the previous section 5 inspection.

The school is due to convert to an academy and join the trust on 1 September 2019.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The governing body was disbanded following the last section 5 inspection in April 2018, and this was the catalyst for change. In its place, the local authority appointed an IEB. The appointed board members brought a wealth of experience in primary education. They reviewed the school's leadership capacity and, following the resignation of the headteacher, restructured the senior leadership team. This included the promotion of the deputy headteacher to acting headteacher and the appointment of new assistant and deputy headteachers. This provided the school with much needed stability of leadership.

However, several members of the teaching staff have left the school throughout the academic year. This has slowed the rate of improvement. Interim reviews by the

local authority show that good progress is being made now that teaching is more settled.

The IEB now receives pertinent information from leaders and conducts its own 'deep dives' alongside local authority officers. As a result, members have confidence in leaders' ability to improve the quality of education. Nevertheless, they are realistic in their evaluation that there is still some way to go for the school to no longer require special measures.

Leaders have refined the appraisal system to closely match the school's improvement priorities. Staff now benefit from personalised training and development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This includes working alongside colleagues from other settings. Nevertheless, systems are not as rigorous as they could be, and leaders have rightly identified that they need to further improve this aspect of the school's work.

Leaders have implemented a systematic approach to the monitoring of pupils' progress. Prior to the inspection, the validity of assessment could not be assured. Teaching staff are beginning to demonstrate a more precise understanding of the standards that children should reach within each year group. However, the systems in place to monitor and support disadvantaged pupils are still not sharp enough.

Leaders draw on the support from a range of experts to provide specific advice and guidance, for example regarding early years education. Improved teaching has had a positive impact on children's outcomes. Leaders continue to work alongside a national leader in education from another school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership of the school. They find staff approachable and say that everyone has time for you. However, parents who spoke with me were anxious about the impending conversion to academy status. They feel that information sharing could be improved further.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The newly appointed teachers have adapted well to the school and, in most cases, demonstrate strong teaching. However, this good practice is not being disseminated across the school wherever teaching remains weaker.

The new approach for the teaching of reading is now starting to come to fruition and have an impact on pupils' outcomes. There are strong signs of improvement in pupils' writing in key stage 1. Pupils now write for purpose and at length, using a range of skills. In most classes, high expectations have led to improvements in the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation.

However, teachers do not consistently adjust what they teach so that it helps the most able pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils are still sometimes undertaking

activities that do not challenge them sufficiently. On these occasions, teaching does not motivate pupils to be resilient, effective learners. Too quickly, pupils become disengaged with learning and their behaviour deteriorates. This is particularly evident in mathematics. Pupils who met with an inspector explained, 'We do not always feel challenged in our lessons.' Work in pupils' books echoed their view, particularly in key stage 2.

In early years, children are making strong progress. This is because systems are in place to capture children's enthusiasm and promote good learning. The quality of teaching in early years is effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have taken decisive action to improve pupils' attendance. Consequently, rates of attendance have improved for all groups of pupils. Leaders have put in place robust systems to hold parents and carers to account for pupils who have poor attendance. This includes pupils who are regularly late to school. The engagement of the educational welfare service is proving effective in providing families with additional support. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen sharply. However, persistent absence remains above the national average.

The assistant headteacher has had a significant impact on improving pupils' behaviour. She has established effective systems to provide pupils with behavioural challenges and targeted support. Ongoing external reviews of behaviour are positive. As a result, recorded incidents of poor behaviour have fallen. However, some pupils in key stage 2 still struggle to maintain their concentration for a prolonged period of time. Teaching staff are not always attentive to this and so pupils' behaviour deteriorates. As a result, pupils become easily distracted and do not make sufficient progress in their learning. This is more evident where work that is provided does not challenge or motivate pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

As a result of weak teaching, pupils in key stage 2 are starting from a very low base. The provisional outcomes of the reading, writing and mathematics assessments taken by Year 6 pupils in 2019 show that pupils achieved poorly in writing. This is because of a legacy of weak teaching. As a result, too many pupils lack the knowledge, skills and understanding required to achieve well. However, the picture is improved for pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics. This includes the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standards. Nonetheless, the progress that some pupils make is not yet strong enough to enable them to catch up quickly and to compensate for the legacy of weak teaching. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.

Current pupils' outcomes for key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are

improving, including for pupils achieving greater depth in reading and mathematics. This is because teaching is now typically stronger in key stage 1. Although there appears to be a decline in standards from 2018. This is because of inaccurate assessment information and a legacy of weak teaching in key stage 1. Inspectors found there is insecurity in these assessments because this cohort of pupils, now in Year 3, are not able to apply what they should know and understand by the end of Year 2.

Teachers are clearer about how to plan learning for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, these pupils are now making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a large proportion of pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding are not yet making good progress. This is because, over time, leaders' scrutiny has not been sharp enough.

The number of pupils who reached the threshold level in the phonics screening check is in line with what is seen nationally.

In the early years, current children's performance information indicates that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in line with the national average. Approximately one fifth of children who enter the early years demonstrate the skills that would be expected for their age. This represents strong progress from children's starting points.

External support

The support for the school has been brokered through the local authority. The external support has had a positive impact on addressing some of the inadequacies in the school. The work to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and early years provision has been particularly effective. There are plans in place to work alongside the local English and mathematics hubs to continue to improve pupils' outcomes. The proposed trust has strategic plans in place to continue to provide additional expertise to improve the school further.