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7 October 2019

Mrs Sue Hulford  
Rowde Church of England Primary Academy  
High Street  
Rowde  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2ND

Dear Mrs Hulford

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Rowde Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 September 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 March 2019.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action for the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2019**

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan work that meets the needs of different groups of pupils and provides sufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils
  - use assessment to adapt and respond to the needs of different pupils in lessons
  - teach comprehension skills systematically and thoroughly to develop pupils' understanding of challenging texts
  - teach reasoning skills effectively to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders' plans for improvement have precise targets and milestones for pupils' achievement and for improving the quality of teaching, and that they are implemented effectively and checked rigorously
  - leaders, at all levels, monitor teaching rigorously in terms of the impact on pupils' progress in order to identify weaknesses and resolve them promptly
  - plans for the use of additional funds are targeted precisely to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
  - communication with parents is improved to keep them informed and involved in their children's learning
  - governors gain a better understanding of the school's performance to enable them to hold leaders to account rigorously
  - leaders tighten the arrangements for safeguarding and check frequently on the effectiveness of their policies and procedures.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
  - the management of behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school
  - procedures for reporting bullying are tightened and incidents of poor behaviour are followed up thoroughly to a successful conclusion
  - an understanding of fundamental British values is embedded throughout the curriculum to develop pupils' cultural awareness.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 September 2019**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, teachers, the chair of the governing body and other governors, and the executive headteacher of Acorn Education Trust (the MAT).

### **Context**

Governors appointed the headteacher in February 2019. Before this, she had been acting headteacher. The deputy headteacher left the school in December 2018. The new deputy headteacher took up the post in September 2019. Since the last inspection, seven governors resigned from their posts, including the chair of the governing body. There are three governors at the school currently, including the new chair of the governing body. Five staff left the school in August 2019. One teacher left the school in September 2019.

### **The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection**

The school has a broad curriculum that covers the subjects within the national curriculum. However, pupils in each year group do not study all the subjects within a year. The choice of subjects is haphazard and depends on the topic that pupils study. Teachers did not plan and check their work in the past. This meant that pupils learned random and disconnected facts. Over time, pupils' learning has become weaker, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers are not making changes when pupils find work too easy or too hard.

Leaders have not spent the funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. As a result, these pupils, especially pupils with SEND, are not learning as well as they should.

In key stage 2, pupils read whichever book they want. No members of staff listen to them read. The most able pupils are not challenged to read more-demanding texts. Pupils who are struggling to read are not provided with any regular support to improve.

Pupils do not learn personal, social, health and economic education on a regular basis. Pupils know how to keep safe when using social media and the internet. They do not know about taking on responsibility or how to learn well.

Leaders introduced new rules about how pupils should behave last term. Although most pupils behave well, there are too many who continue to chat or walk about when others are trying to learn. Most teachers manage behaviour effectively in lessons but there are a few who do not follow the guidelines. Teachers are tracking

pupils' behaviour, so they can be more precise in their actions when pupils misbehave. Bullying is less frequent as a result. Teachers deal with it effectively on the rare occasions that it happens.

Leaders are working well with the MAT which will sponsor the school from 1 November 2019. The executive headteacher has supported the headteacher with introducing new assessment systems and teachers' planning. The leader for SEND in the MAT is working with the special educational needs coordinator so that pupils with SEND learn more.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher, with the support of the diocese and the local authority, has made safeguarding effective. The checks on staff in school, and for recruitment of staff, are securely in place. Leaders have made sure that pupils are safe in school by considering carefully the dangers of the two gates in the school grounds. They lock one when pupils are in school. For the other, they have lessened the risk to pupils' safety with clear guidelines to parents for picking up and dropping off their children.

There has not been effective leadership at the school for some time. Neither governors nor the headteacher have had any leadership training. Governors did not fulfil their responsibility to support, challenge and guide the headteacher in the past. The headteacher has not had the capacity to make the necessary improvements. Pupils' learning has suffered as a result and those leaving key stage 2 are not prepared well for the next stage in their education.

The headteacher has written a school improvement plan to deal with the issues raised at the inspection in March 2019. However, she has taken very few actions as there have not been the leaders to support her. Some parents say that communication has improved.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Leaders from the MAT are adding extra support and capacity to the school. The headteacher is benefiting from regular meetings with the executive headteacher which help her plan the next stage of improvements.
- New governors, including the chair, are receiving training so that they can undertake their roles more effectively.
- The school is fully staffed despite recent resignations.
- The deputy headteacher started in September 2019. She is improving the teaching of English. Also, she is monitoring the pupil premium strategy so that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Teachers, including new staff, are keen to learn how to improve their practice.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The lack of leadership over time has increased the weakness in teaching and the provision of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are achieving less well, year on year. The amount of improvement needed since the inspection has increased, not declined.
- Only in the past three weeks has there been any sign of planned improvements, so there is no impact.

### **External support**

The diocese provided support to the school following the inspection. They arranged for the external review of governance and the use of the pupil premium. Immediately before the review, several governors left. There has not been any impact for disadvantaged pupils, although, currently, the new deputy headteacher is checking the plan and starting to implement the strategies.