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Ms Donna Christy
Langland Community School
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Dear Ms Christy

Special measures monitoring inspection of Langland Community School

Following my visit to your school on 1–2 October 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 September 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 overarching improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, and the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Milton Keynes. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and their impact on the outcomes of all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring that information about pupils' prior learning is accurate and used to plan lessons which meet the learning needs of pupils well, so that they make good progress from their different starting points
 - raising teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve, particularly for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is secure and used effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by reviewing and evaluating the impact of strategies already used, and developing new, more effective approaches where necessary.
- Improve the quality of leadership at all levels, including governance, so that leaders can drive significant and sustained improvement, by:
 - developing effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work, particularly in relation to the effectiveness of the spending of the pupil premium and the quality of the curriculum
 - refining improvements already made to assessment systems so that they provide reliable information about pupils' levels of attainment and progress
 - ensuring that monitoring of the quality of teaching and of pupils' outcomes, particularly by middle leaders, is rigorous and effective, so that teaching enables pupils to make good progress
 - improving the skills and effectiveness of governors so that they provide high levels of challenge to the school's leaders to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Improve outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils make rapid progress and achieve the standards of which they are capable.

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 1 October 2019 to 2 October 2019

Evidence

I observed the school's work and met with the headteacher of Langland Community School, accompanied by the executive headteacher of the federation to which the school belongs. I made short visits to classes to look at pupils' learning in mathematics, reading and writing, and also separately visited a number of classes to look at pupils' behaviour. I met with a small group of pupils to review and discuss their work across a range of subjects. I also met with some pupils to listen to them read. In addition, I met a group of pupils to discuss behaviour and attitudes. Two pupils gave me a brief tour of the school, and I also visited the specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) relating to behaviour, known as the 'Acorn class'.

I held meetings with leaders who manage year groups, subject leaders, leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, the inclusion leader, a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and a group of staff.

I reviewed a range of documents, including safeguarding records, policies, improvement plans and the school's new curriculum. I also scrutinised records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. I held conversations with representatives from the local authority. I spoke to several parents at the beginning of the day.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with Greenleys Junior School. The headteacher of Greenleys Junior School was appointed executive headteacher of the federation in January 2019. In summer term of 2019, three new assistant headteachers took up their posts.

The school is in the process of joining a multi-academy trust (MAT) and considering different sponsors.

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

In the months immediately after the previous inspection, the school improved slowly. A number of leaders and teachers left the school, resulting in upheaval. Following the appointment of new leaders, including a new executive headteacher, the school has made faster progress. There have been improvements in all the areas that were identified in the previous inspection report. However, some aspects are more developed than others. For example, behaviour and governance have

improved more comprehensively than the quality of teaching. Key stage 2 outcomes have improved since 2018. They are better than those in key stage 1. Outcomes in key stage 1 are well below average and too few pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2.

Across the school, teaching staff have raised their expectations of how hard pupils should work, the way they should present their work and their attitudes to learning. Generally speaking, children and pupils are keen to learn. The school has a more purposeful feel.

Leaders have placed great emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. Some aspects of teaching have improved but not all. Teachers are now better at organising pupils' learning. For instance, pupils can verbally pick out the methods writers use to engage readers and are starting to use them in their own writing. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough, and this is having a negative effect on how well pupils are learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers are not clear enough about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to master before they move on to harder work. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to improve the curriculum in mathematics and teachers' subject knowledge.

The teaching of phonics is improving. Leaders with expertise in reading are ensuring that pupils are placed in appropriate groups. Teachers and assistants received training from external experts last term, which they are using well when they teach pupils to read. For example, they show pupils how to make the right sounds for the letters they read. Teachers and assistants carefully check whether pupils have gaps in their knowledge or are confused. They make sure that they return to any letters and words that pupils cannot read fluently.

Subject leaders are developing the curriculum with the help of year-group leaders. They are rightly using the national curriculum as a basis for their work. Subject leaders are breaking down the subjects they manage into smaller topics. They are planning the knowledge and skills which will be introduced to pupils in these topics and the order in which the topics will be taught. In some subjects and year groups, this work is further ahead than others. For example, it is more developed in writing than in several other subjects, including wider curriculum subjects.

Behaviour is improving. There are fewer interruptions to pupils' learning and pupils say that their classes are calmer. Teachers have been trained in a range of approaches for managing behaviour, known as 'the behaviour blueprint'. Staff are making good use of these approaches when they direct pupils about their behaviour. Leaders gather information about the type and number of behaviour incidents. They analyse this information carefully. Attendance has improved slightly but remains too low despite leaders' best efforts.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and staff, including the executive headteacher, have successfully created a team spirit within the school. This has led to closer working relationships between staff and leaders. New leaders have settled in quickly and are making a positive contribution. They have successfully ensured that teachers receive the right training, from both internal and external providers. Leaders work well with their counterparts in their partner school. For example, they have worked together to check that teachers in both schools assess pupils' work accurately.

Over the past few months, senior leaders have been sorting out fundamental issues, such as finance, the school's move to academy status and setting up the new governing body. This has meant that they have not always checked other leaders' work in developing the curriculum and enhancing teachers' subject knowledge closely enough.

Year-group leaders are providing one-to-one support and clear targets for improvement for the teachers they oversee. Targets are focused on deepening teachers' subject knowledge, improving the way they manage pupils' behaviour and strengthening their teaching skills. Year-group leaders check whether their support is leading to improvements in pupils' learning. They closely track any additional suggestions that they make after their checks to ensure that teachers are acting on them.

Inclusion is led effectively. Inclusion leaders have enhanced the support for pupils with additional behavioural needs, so that fewer are excluded from school. In order to meet the needs of this group, inclusion leaders have created a bespoke provision, known as 'Acorn class'. The provision is carefully organised and planned so pupils receive the therapies and support they need to develop a more positive approach to learning. The staff in 'Acorn class' run programmes that nurture pupils well. Teachers and leaders make every effort possible to ensure that pupils' moves back to their main classes are smooth.

The new governing body, created when the school federated, has gelled together well. There is evidence from governing body minutes that governors are realistic and, while acknowledging progress to date, know that there is still some way to go. Governors check whether disadvantaged pupils are catching up. They ask leaders to explain how their proposals for spending additional funding contribute to this aim. Governors challenge leaders effectively because they know the school well. Many governors have relevant experience, which they use to make their questions sharper.

Leaders have developed the school improvement plan over time. The plan is detailed. Actions link closely to the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection report. The main school improvement plan needs more detail to help leaders and governors evaluate whether actions are having the intended impact.

Priorities on subject improvement plans dovetail well with overarching priorities in the improvement plan. However, subject improvement plans vary too much in quality and plans in some subjects are stronger than others.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Teachers have become more accurate in assessing pupils' work in key stage 2 and have a clearer view of what they might find difficult. This has enabled teachers to target pupils for additional help more precisely.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop stronger links with parents. For example, learning mentors work closely with families, providing advice and support. They sensibly help families to overcome barriers that may prevent pupils from coming to school.
- The school is profoundly aware of the issues that some families, pupils and children face. They provide a very caring and nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe.
- The local authority praised the support for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) provided by new leaders.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders and governors need to place even greater emphasis on making sure that the staffing situation remains stable. This important priority is not always emphasised enough in plans.
- A review of governance was undertaken promptly after the previous inspection. However, following federation a new governing body was set up. This means that recommendations from the review do not relate well enough to the work of the current governing body.
- Despite the school's best efforts, including changing the way the start of the day is organised, too many pupils arrive late.
- There are not strong enough links between subject improvement plans and plans outlining the learning included in each topic and the order in which topics are introduced to pupils.

External support

The local authority has worked extensively with the school, providing a wide range of support, including help with managing finances, admissions and referrals to social services. This assistance has placed the school on a firmer footing. The local authority's SEND specialist team has also helped the school to become more inclusive by assisting leaders in setting up the 'Acorn class'. Members of the specialist team also work on a regular basis with individual pupils with SEND.

The school has also benefited from training provided by external organisations. Leaders have selected this carefully, making sure that suggested approaches are in keeping with the school's values. Teachers and assistants have received effective phonics training from an English Hub in a neighbouring authority. Leaders are becoming clearer about the training required in the following months. They recognise that they need support in developing the curriculum and enhancing teachers' subject knowledge. The local authority acknowledges that these aspects of the school's work have not been given enough priority to date. It has plans in place to put this right, including by appointing a new school improvement partner with expertise in mathematics.