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11 March 2020

Ms Victoria Wallis-O'Dell
Lillington Primary School
Cubbington Road
Lillington
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV32 7AG

Dear Ms Wallis-O'Dell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lillington Primary School

Following my visit with Tina Willmott, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10 to 11 March 2020, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2019. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The information contained within this draft report should not be shared or published under any circumstances. Ofsted will consider the sharing of information in any manner a serious breach of confidentiality and will take appropriate action if necessary. **To be deleted at proofread.**

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks

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 and raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring that work is matched well to pupils' abilities, particularly for those with SEND and pupils of lower ability and higher ability
 - making sure that staff make good use of assessment during lessons to clarify learning for pupils who do not understand, or to provide more challenge
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics, so that their teaching promotes pupils' deep understanding of mathematical concepts
 - ensuring that pupils are supported to apply their skills in handwriting, grammar and punctuation consistently and accurately in their writing
 - providing high-quality individual support for staff, where teaching is weak.
- Improve the impact of leadership and governance by:
 - developing a more effective level of challenge from governors, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding so that future spending decisions are targeted more precisely and raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that the PE and sport premium is spent appropriately and fully to improve the quality of provision and opportunities for pupils
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of support provided for pupils with SEND
 - putting in place training for staff so that they can better support pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that pupils with complex needs receive a sufficiently broad and balanced education and are well prepared for secondary school
 - providing clear responsibilities and direction to all senior and middle leaders
 - making sure that improvement plans have precise timescales for actions
 - further developing the curriculum so that it deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding across the foundation subjects.
- Provide more robust safeguarding arrangements by:
 - ensuring that pupils are supervised safely and effectively at social times
 - making sure that pre-appointment checks of staff are overseen by governors and senior leaders
 - reviewing and monitoring risk assessments related to fire and site safety.

- Improve behaviour and reduce the amount of fixed-term exclusions by:
 - continuing to embed the new behaviour policy
 - develop more effective systems to monitor and evaluate incidents related to behaviour and bullying
 - urgently addressing the poor behaviour of some pupils at social times.
- Develop the quality of provision and raise attainment in the early years by:
 - urgently addressing the quality of teaching and children’s experiences in the Nursery
 - making sure that adults are deployed to have the fullest impact on children’s learning
 - ensuring that activities planned for children provide an effective level of challenge and motivation, particularly for boys.

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

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 March 2020 to 11 March 2020

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator and those with responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors also met with groups of teachers and teaching assistants. An inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair. An inspector also met with leaders from the trust that is supporting the school and representatives of the local authority.

Inspectors visited lessons to evaluate pupils' behaviour and the quality of education. This included the school's specialist resource base. Inspectors spoke to some pupils to talk about their experiences of school. We also observed and talked informally to pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors reviewed documents, including action plans, information about attendance and behaviour, curriculum plans and external support.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection, a small number of staff have joined the school. These include a teacher, teaching assistants and site supervisor. The vacancies on the governing body have been filled. The new governors bring a range of relevant expertise and experience.

Due to a significant budget deficit, the school is currently undergoing a restructuring process. This will result in changes to lunchtime supervision arrangements and the school's leadership team.

Plans for the school to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) are now well advanced. It is hoped that this process will be finalised early in the summer term 2020.

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

There has been improvement in many areas of the school since the previous section 5 inspection. Improvement has been particularly evident since the appointment of the headteacher at the start of the current academic year.

Leaders have introduced a topic-based curriculum which has been planned to meet the expectations set out in the national curriculum. Pupils speak positively about the topics they are studying. They are increasingly engaged in lessons and interested in what they are learning about. However, the curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. There is much more to be done to ensure that staff are teaching

the right things in the right order to help pupils remember and understand more. Leaders are not clear whether some subjects, such as music and Spanish in key stage 2, are being taught effectively.

Staff and leaders have on-going access to a broad range of professional development opportunities. These are beginning to have a positive impact by helping to secure and improve the quality of teaching and increasing adult's subject knowledge. Teachers are increasingly using assessments to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to plan learning opportunities to address these.

Leaders are taking action to raise the profile of reading across the school. For example, they have identified 100 books pupils should read before leaving school. Guided reading sessions and the use of high-quality texts are helping to develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. However, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent and this continues to slow the pace at which younger pupils learn to read. Staff do not hear younger pupils read often enough. The books pupils take home are not matched closely enough to the letters and sounds that they have been taught.

There have been improvements in the quality of mathematics teaching. Work is now more closely matched to pupils' needs. Daily practice of skills is helping pupils to develop their fluency in number concepts. Pupils have increased opportunities for mathematical problem solving.

As a result of sustained support, the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved. Some teachers are becoming increasingly confident in planning for pupils with SEND, although this is not yet consistent across the school. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers so that they can support pupils effectively. However, when supporting pupils one to one, teaching assistants are not always provided with suitable materials. This slows the progress that pupils can make. The specialist resource base is a supportive environment. Individualised programmes are in place to enable pupils to learn well.

Significant changes to the organisation of the early years have had a positive impact on the progress made by Nursery children. Similar improvements have yet to be fully realised in Reception. Children in Reception are keen to learn and they have access to a wide range of resources and activities. However, there is often no clear purpose or direction for these activities. A lack of focus and pace means that children do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders are creating additional opportunities to support pupils' personal development. For example, assemblies now take place daily. These are used to reinforce school values, themes or events. Teachers are increasingly including memorable events, such as a trip, into each topic to help reinforce pupils' learning. A residential trip for Year 6 pupils is being offered for the first time this year.

Leaders have developed a new personal, social and health education policy. The policy is comprehensive and, when implemented, should address the gaps in the current provision, such as E-safety and some aspects of fundamental British values.

The positive changes in behaviour and attitudes, reported at the time of the first monitoring visit, have been maintained. Pupils feel that the school's behaviour policy is fair. While all adults follow the policy, there is some inconsistency in how it is applied by different members of staff. For the majority of pupils, the school's behaviour policy works well. The number of pupils excluded from school is reducing. Very few pupils have been excluded on more than one occasion.

Leaders have addressed concerns in relation to bullying. Pupils spoken to understand what bullying is. They say that it happens much less often now than in the past. The school's approach, 'stop, walk, talk', appears to be effective. Pupils say that they use this approach and that they feel safer as a result.

Attendance continues to be low compared to other schools nationally. Support for families has been strengthened through the work of the attendance lead and the learning mentor. Leaders are taking appropriate action to raise awareness within the community of the importance of school attendance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the first monitoring inspection, safeguarding procedures have been further reviewed and strengthened. Staff, including those who are new to the school, are clear on how to raise and record any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare. Checks relating to health and safety now take place at the prescribed intervals. Fire wardens and first aiders have completed recent re-training. Leaders complete all appropriate checks on staff before they start working at the school.

Leaders and governors have an increasingly accurate and detailed understanding of how well the school is doing. Although the school is not a member of the MAT, trust leaders are closely involved with the school and contribute to reviews and evaluations. The headteacher has reviewed and updated the comprehensive action plan. It contains clear priorities and relevant actions. This helps to ensure that leaders and staff are focused on the right areas to bring about improvements.

The headteacher has made a tangible difference to the effectiveness of the school. She is very clear about what needs to be done and she has high expectations of everyone. The headteacher supports her staff well to help bring about improvements. The staff are also supportive of the headteacher and they are working together to realise the necessary changes.

At the time of the first monitoring inspection, many systems and processes had just been introduced. Since then, leaders and staff have worked hard to establish these. While there is still much to do, staff recognise that things are improving. As a result,

they are motivated to undertake further developments. Subject and other leaders are clear on their roles and responsibilities. They benefit from regular professional development to support them in their leadership roles.

The governing body has been considerably strengthened since the previous inspection. The new governors have a broad range of educational and other relevant experience. Governors are clear about where progress has been made and the areas requiring further work. The governing body are well positioned to bring in further changes once the school has joined the MAT, for example taking action to strengthen their monitoring role. A new school website has been developed and will be launched shortly.

External events, such as preparing for joining the MAT, managing a deficit budget and staffing concerns, have taken up a considerable amount of the headteacher's and governors' time in recent months. This has led to progress in school improvement being slower than leaders had intended. Despite this, the clear signs of improvement are reflected in the views of one leader who said, 'the school is unrecognisable from 12 months ago.'

Following a review of the school's use of pupil premium funding, leaders created an action plan to address the weaknesses identified. Leaders have begun to raise teachers' awareness about pupils' barriers to learning. The progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium is now more carefully tracked. Increasingly, pupils can access additional support to help address their needs. This may be academic or social and emotional support. It is too soon to see the impact of these developments.

External support

The school has been well supported by the local authority since the previous inspection. This includes targeted input from a variety of sources. During the autumn term, considerable support came from St John's Teaching School Alliance. This work helped to bring about improvements in the quality of provision for children in the early years and pupils with SEND. The level of support has reduced during the spring term but continues to include support for the headteacher.

Increasingly, support is provided by The Lion Alliance Teaching School and the proposed sponsoring MAT. The MAT's school improvement lead is working in school two days per week. This is having a positive impact on developing the role of leaders and the quality of support provided by teaching assistants. Further input is provided by a headteacher within the MAT to develop the provision in Reception. Three specialist leaders in education will focus their input on phonics, reading and SEND. Staff and leaders have access to a broad range of professional development opportunities.

PROTECT-INSPECTION



The local authority continues to monitor the school's progress. The local authority is confident in leaders and governors to improve the school's overall effectiveness.