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Mrs Moira Cross
Wood End Primary School
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Dear Mrs Cross

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wood End Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10–11 July 2018, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2016. 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.

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 governing body, the chief executive officer of Community Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in December 2016.

- Improve progress and thereby raise attainment throughout key stages 1 and 2, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for pupils across the curriculum, especially for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - plan work which meets pupils' needs, including the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - adjust tasks as necessary during lessons in response to pupils' understanding and their rates of progress
 - provide work that maintains the pupils' interest so they have positive attitudes to learning
 - provide high-quality phonics teaching, based on a consistent approach
 - carefully match reading books to pupils' abilities
 - give pupils regular opportunities to write at length
 - plan work that develops pupils' subject-specific skills across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the multi-academy trust, governors and school leaders understand the accountability structure of the school and their roles and responsibilities
 - school development activities are carefully prioritised, sharply focused on the key weaknesses in school and accurately evaluated to ensure that they are having an impact on improving outcomes for pupils
 - weaknesses in teaching are identified and the right support and guidance is put in place
 - pupils' progress is assessed accurately across the curriculum, and assessment information is used carefully to plan work at the right level for all pupils and to provide support quickly to any who may be falling behind
 - additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - training and support is provided for leaders to enable them to become effective in their roles
 - disruption in lessons is minimised so that it does not stop pupils from learning

- the curriculum is planned and taught to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their skills across a range of subjects
- school leaders' roles and responsibilities, particularly those of the head of school, are reviewed to provide them with enough time to carry out checks on teaching, learning and assessment and provide support where it is needed.

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.

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 third monitoring inspection on 10 July 2018 to 11 July 2018

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher, associate headteacher, middle leaders, teaching staff, pupils, the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of Community Academies Trust.

In addition, the inspector spoke with parents during the school's sports day and at lunchtime. The inspector observed teaching in different year groups, looked at work in pupils' books and on display, and saw pupils taking part in sports. He also examined various school documents, attendance information, reports about the school's work, the school's website and the single central record of checks on staff. The inspector observed early morning routines as parents were bringing their children to school.

Context

The school is in the Community Academies Trust. In November 2017, a local governing body was formed to provide governance of two trust schools: Wood End Primary and Dordon Primary.

An executive headteacher continues to divide her time between the two schools. She is responsible for the work and performance of both schools. An associate headteacher provides day-to-day operational leadership at Wood End Primary.

Since the second monitoring inspection in February 2018, the teaching staff team has remained unchanged. One new governor has been appointed to fill a vacancy left by a resignation.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Across the school, team spirit and a united focus on school improvement are evident. This is the result of constructive leadership.

The executive headteacher continues to provide strong and ambitious leadership. She is able to delegate and has a realistic expectation that her leadership team will emulate her high standards and see jobs through to completion. Indeed, within the leadership team, senior staff have a clearly understood division of roles and a proven ability to support others in constructive ways. Similarly, the governing body operates in a supportive but now more informed and, where needs be, critical way.

Without exception, all members of the leadership team have benefited from training, including their attendance at a recent leadership day organised by the trust. This has sharpened their strategic planning and ability to evaluate the school's

performance. Through their regular checks on classroom practice and pupils' work, they know that teaching and assessment are improving. They also know that pupils continue to make better progress in some year groups than others due to variations in the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

Subject leaders, in particular, are now more involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching and the school's improvement plans. Since the previous monitoring inspection, these leaders have worked alongside teachers in order to strengthen aspects of teaching and provide support. They have led staff meetings, arranged training and continue to make regular checks on books. All of these activities provide staff with guidance and encouragement. Leaders have also sought the views of pupils, albeit in a rather limited way. Their recent surveys of pupils' views about reading and special educational needs, for example, were a good idea but the pupil samples were very small and the questions asked did not focus on the impact of recent changes. Consequently, the responses gathered were not very helpful in evaluating pupils' views about the effectiveness of actions to improve their school experience. Nevertheless, pupils are consistently positive in class and, during this inspection, a group of older pupils told the inspector that they thought that the school was improving. They reported that lessons were more interesting and that they now did more work, and received more helpful guidance, than they used to.

Similarly, parents spoken to also expressed very positive views about the school. Many had come to school to watch sports day and then stayed for a picnic lunch on the school field. Several parents commented positively on improvements to the organisation of sports day and approved of other recent changes at the school. Inspection evidence supports these positive parental views about the school's upward direction of travel. There is, however, scope to provide information events for parents to let them know how they can support their children's learning at home.

The pupil premium fund is used correctly, with increasing effectiveness on disadvantaged pupils' progress at school. Staff have thought carefully about different factors that influence target pupils' attitudes and performance at school. They have drawn upon this information to tailor support and provide activities that meet particular needs. For instance, some funds have been used to provide additional after-school activities in order to increase pupils' levels of engagement and participation in school life. Looking ahead, the school is recruiting the help of a family learning tutor to plan events that will involve parents and pupils. Through this, school leaders aim to improve parents' understanding of how they can assist with their children's education.

The school has introduced a new approach to mathematics teaching and staff are still getting to grips with this. The leadership of mathematics radiates enthusiasm and ambition and generates an infectious energy for change that clearly sweeps people along. That said, there is room to improve the clarity of leaders' explanations so that staff understand the reasons for certain changes and how these will improve

pupils' learning and understanding. As it is, some staff are implementing changes without a fully informed understanding of what pupils are expected to achieve.

The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is informed and organised, having strengthened considerably in recent times. Provision has continued to develop and a nurture room, which provides a calm, reassuring space for pupils, has just been created. Information about the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is readily available and shows that, in almost all cases, their progress has accelerated over the last 12 months. Furthermore, staff receive regular feedback about the impact of their work on these pupils' well-being and achievement at school.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have made a start on work to improve pupils' progression of skills in non-core subjects. A clearly set out overview of the sequence of knowledge and skills to be taught in subjects such as art, history or geography has been put in place. Staff have used this documentation to reflect on their current practice and identify where improvements could be made. As yet, there have been no significant changes to the way that non-core subjects are taught or assessed, but staff now have a helpful steer about future developments in this area.

The reckless driving behaviour of some parents witnessed by inspectors during the previous monitoring inspection was not apparent this time. The early morning routines have changed so that the school car park gate is closed after the school bus has arrived. This prevents cars from entering when children are arriving and is definitely a change for the better.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching continues to improve and is leading to better progress for most pupils. Improvements seen during this inspection were most marked in Year 3, where pupils have clearly responded positively to the purposeful routines and higher expectations now in place. When writing about a character from a classroom story book, for example, pupils readily reached for dictionaries or sought guidance from other resources without any prompting from staff. They were able to embellish and extend their writing with some impressive words and took time to edit and refine it before they were satisfied with the finished result. Furthermore, teaching then drew upon examples of pupils' freshly completed work to underline teaching points and generate constructive comments from the class. Pupils' growing initiative, pride and ability to reflect on their work is increasingly apparent in younger pupils coming up through the school. In Year 2, for example, pupils' teamwork and cheerful enthusiasm, imagination and initiative, which was evident in group work during a lively English lesson, was a joy to see.

In the main, a more consistent approach to teaching and a no-nonsense and

constructive policy to discipline are apparent across the school. That said, there are still aspects of teaching that are not quite right. In Years 4 and 5, for instance, some teaching loses sight of the learning objective and hurries through content in a rush to get tasks done. When this happens, learning suffers and it is hard for staff to know who has understood and is ready to push on and who has not. Work in pupils' books reveals a rather erratic picture of progress in these two year groups. There is evidence of sustained progress in mathematics but a mixed picture in writing. Improving the consistency of expectation and raising standards of pupils' written work, including their spelling and handwriting, remain key development priorities in key stage 2, and particularly in Years 4 and 5.

Further down the school, standards have evidently risen as a result of improved teaching. Nevertheless, some simple mistakes go uncorrected and then persist into key stage 2. For instance, mathematics teaching in key stage 1 is certainly enabling pupils to grasp key mathematical concepts. However, staff allow some pupils' simple spelling errors of key subject-specific vocabulary to pass by unchallenged. In many cases, such mistakes are made by able pupils who certainly have the capability to put these errors right. This inattentiveness to mistakes is not helpful and, if left unchecked, can lead pupils into careless and enduring habits that will hinder them in the future.

As noted in the previous monitoring inspection, phonics teaching is now consistent and effective. In fact, the school has made strides forwards in its work to promote reading and increase pupils' skills. A whole-school project called 'the power of reading' has raised the profile of books, authors and storytelling. Classroom displays highlight pupils' writing and other work that has been inspired by stories that pupils have read or heard. In all classes, pupils read, and are read to, regularly and have access to an appropriate range of books. In keeping with the school's focus on reading, a secondary school transition project for Year 6 pupils has been based around a piece of contemporary fiction.

Teaching incorporates some interesting topics that inject excitement into learning and, when appropriate, inspire pupils to write at length. A whole-school airport day, when staff and pupils reimagined the school as an airport terminal, generated some memorable cross-curricular work and writing about different countries. Recently, Year 6 pupils completed a very worthy piece of animation work based around the ill-fated Titanic ocean liner. In Years 4 and 5, a project based on the Ancient Greeks stimulated some imaginative writing and artwork, which is rightly celebrated on an eye-catching display.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

As noted in the previous monitoring inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually fine. Most pupils respond quickly to teachers and teaching assistants' instructions and requests and are polite to one another. Around the school site there are several signs that remind pupils what to do if they are upset by someone

else's behaviour. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and say that adults will always help them if they have a problem. They also say that instances of boisterous behaviour on the playground are much reduced. Parents who expressed a view during this inspection said they had no concerns about pupils' behaviour.

Attendance at school has slipped during the last two terms. An analysis of the school's attendance figures reveals that the number of unauthorised absences from school has crept upwards. Furthermore, there are 20 pupils who have missed at least 10% of their schooling this year, which is the equivalent of half a day each week.

Outcomes for pupils

In key stage 1, standards have risen. This is evident in the 2018 end of key stage 1 assessments, which are a considerable improvement on last year's results. Indeed, in both reading and writing, the proportions of pupils that reached the expected standard for their age are above last year's national figures. In mathematics, results are not quite as strong but are not far behind the national average for last year.

The most recent Year 1 phonics screening check results are also positive, with the 2018 results building higher on the above average results seen in 2017.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 2, however, remain weak. Provisional 2018 results show that just 29% of pupils reached the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics combined. To be fair, this combined figure masks the fact that figures for individual subjects were higher at 52% in reading, 57% in writing and 52% in mathematics. Even so, these results are still below average and indicative of pupils' uneven progress through the school. The stronger progress made recently was not enough to get all Year 6 leavers ready for the secondary school curriculum.

Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information reveals that progress for current pupils continues to improve, although it is stronger in some year groups than others. In addition, some able pupils make repeated or careless errors that are not routinely picked up in class. This does not help these pupils to make the most of their abilities.

External support

The school continues to benefit from effective support from schools and leaders within the multi-academy trust. School leaders from Wood End Primary have attended a leadership day organised by the trust, and staff have received helpful advice from educational consultants and local school leaders.