

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 January 2018

Mrs Michelle Parsons
Headteacher
Trinity Church School
Woodborough Lane
Radstock
Bath
Somerset
BA3 3DE

Dear Mrs Parsons

Special measures monitoring inspection of Trinity Church School

Following my visit with Lizzie Meadows, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 December 2017, 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 April 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 recommend that the school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in consultation with me, before the next monitoring visit.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bath and North East Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that the leaders and managers of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership:
 - rapidly secure a stable teaching staff of well-trained and skilled practitioners
 - establish a consistent system for assessing and tracking pupils' work which teachers then use to plan learning and to identify pupils who need extra support, including in the early years
 - hold senior leaders fully to account for the rapid improvement of the school.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching:
 - establish a robust system for checking the quality of teachers' performance
 - devise a structured programme of training to improve the quality of teaching
 - learn from the best practice in other, highly effective schools.
- Urgently improve pupils' outcomes and insist that:
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, including in the early years
 - the most able pupils are given activities that engage and challenge them to think deeply about their learning
 - learning support assistants receive further direction to increase the effectiveness of their work, especially when supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 11 December 2017 to 12 December 2017

Evidence

An inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and held meetings with the chief executive officer, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and five governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils in classrooms and around the school. Inspectors conducted learning walks with the deputy headteacher and headteacher. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors heard pupils read in class groups and individually. A meeting was also held with a group of teaching assistants.

Context

Staffing has remained mainly stable since the previous monitoring visit, with the exception that one of the deputy headteachers has moved to another school in the trust and one new teacher has joined the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school's leaders have made clear improvements to the quality of education provided for the pupils. Their expectations of pupils and staff are now far higher. They have a clear view of the strengths of the school and are tackling the remaining weaknesses steadily.

The chief executive officer of the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership, along with other representatives, play an active part in the school's development. Fortnightly meetings provide challenge to you and your senior leaders so that the momentum of improvement continues. The transfer of staff between schools in the partnership has played a significant part in raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, the trust's investment in middle leadership training has enhanced the capacity of leadership in the school.

The governors have made good use of the training and advice they have received from the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership. As a result, governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are holding senior leaders to account well. Through careful analysis of results, regular meetings with the senior leaders and visits to classrooms, they now know what specific improvements need to be made to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are forward thinking. They are currently implementing an effective succession plan to facilitate the smooth transition of a new chair of governors. This serves to develop the leadership capacity within the governing body.

Following the last monitoring visit, the school has developed the roles of middle leaders. It is early days, but leaders for English and mathematics have supported

staff well in implementing changes and improving staff subject knowledge. With the increased leadership capacity in the school, you recognise the need to review leadership roles and responsibilities so that all leaders and teachers are rigorously held to account for pupils' progress. This will be a focus at my next visit.

In reviewing the quality of teaching, leaders have concentrated on how effectively members of staff are contributing to the achievement of the school's overall targets. Leaders work decisively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This work has been effective in 'raising the bar'. Leaders now plan to work even more closely with individual teachers to tackle specific aspects of their practice that need to be improved. For example, not all teachers adhere to the national Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Your leader for special educational needs (SEN) is engaging effectively with external support to ensure that pupils' needs are correctly diagnosed. However, a small minority of teachers do not take full responsibility to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or to follow school policies. Although a much improved picture, not all teachers are using assessments to plan appropriate activities for different pupil groups and in particular, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils' progress slows.

Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school. They recognise the changes that have taken place and say that they are 'for the better'. This positive parental response is reflected in pupils who told me, 'we love our school'. School leaders and teachers have been successful in improving communication in the school. Many parents commented on the revitalised parent-teacher association which they say, 'is cementing relationships' and 'growing the school community'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Most teachers have been effective in reviewing the achievement of pupils across the school. Teachers know the pupils well and most are competent at using the school's new assessment systems to make accurate assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand. Most teachers use this information to match work to the pupils' different needs. This is improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, there are some occasions when teaching is still not closely matched to pupils' needs. This is slowing the progress of some pupils.

The school's own records, as well as evidence from external consultants and from this visit, indicate that the quality of teaching in the school is improving but remains too inconsistent. Nevertheless, there have been clear improvements in the teaching of mathematics in particular. Teachers' expectations have risen. Teachers are now planning activities which develop pupils' resilience to apply their mathematical understanding to solve problems. Leaders provided effective training for teachers who had weaker subject knowledge in mathematics. Consequently, outcomes in

mathematics have improved to be more in line with national expectations in most year groups.

Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. Leaders ensure that support staff receive the training they need. Consequently, teaching assistants feel valued. They are well informed and support pupils well. Their work is helping pupils to catch up.

Teachers are implementing a new curriculum plan to develop pupils' writing skills since my last visit. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are much improved since my last visit. Pupils write more frequently across the curriculum as well as in English lessons. Teachers are teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar skills more precisely. However, the impact of this new approach on standards has been lessened in some classes where teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils do not apply their new writing skills. Work set in pupils' skills book does not complement other work. Since my last visit, teachers are following a new framework which aims to ensure that all subject areas are taught well. For example, pupils' books show a greater emphasis on the teaching of science this term. Similarly, teachers are planning activities which develop pupils' skills in subjects such as history and geography. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work because there is a small minority of teachers who are not following the school's policy closely enough. As a result, the development of pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics remains too patchy and this restricts pupils' progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at play. They relate well to each other and to school staff and visitors. Pupils also respect the school environment, which is kept in a good state of repair and cleanliness. They told me how behaviour has improved because of the system you have introduced.

The pupils who spoke to the inspector said that they enjoyed coming to school and would recommend Trinity Church School to others. They feel safe in the school. Bullying, they said, happens very rarely and, when it does, is dealt with robustly and quickly. All of them knew whom to contact if they had personal worries or concerns about their work. They knew how to keep themselves safe in a variety of circumstances, including when using the internet and social media.

The great majority of the parents who spoke to the inspector, or responded to the online questionnaire, were very positive about the support that they, their families and their children received from staff. Of the parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, 100% would recommend the school. The school works closely with social care and other agencies to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of its pupils. It has rigorous systems for checking on the suitability of staff to work with children.

Outcomes for pupils

Standards in the school are rising. A similar proportion of pupils to the national average met the standard in the Year 1 phonics check. At the end of last term, the proportions of 11-year-olds who reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics were slightly above the national average. A greater proportion of pupils also achieved the higher standard of 'greater depth'. However, despite improvements, the results for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were lower than the national average.

In early years, children are making progress from their starting points. However, the rate of progress needs to increase considerably if these children are to perform as well as others across the country. Last term, the proportion of early years children who achieved a good level of development was higher than in the previous year and above the national average.

The work in most pupils' books and the school's own analyses show that the upward trend in performance is being maintained in most, but not all, year groups. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is beginning to accelerate as a result of better targeted support, but there is more work to be done here.

External support

The regional schools commissioner continues to keep a watchful eye on the school's improvement journey. There has been no other external support this academic year, as the school has drawn upon the expertise within the trust.