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Miss Nicky Broomhall
Principal
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Dear Miss Broomhall

Special measures monitoring inspection of All Saints National Academy

Following my visit with Amarjit Cheema, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 15 to 16 May 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 previous monitoring visit.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in May 2018. 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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - swiftly clarifying roles and responsibilities for the leadership of the school
 - tackling quickly, systematically and effectively the weaker teaching which continues to inhibit pupils' progress
 - managing the performance of teachers effectively
 - developing the capacity to support and challenge leadership at all levels
 - improving both the core and wider curriculum so that planned learning successfully builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, meets the needs and interests of pupils and enables them to make good progress
 - ensuring that the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supports them to make good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - teachers are equipped with a deep understanding of how pupils learn and strong subject knowledge that will support them in delivering high-quality learning for all groups of pupils
 - all teachers plan a coherent teaching sequence which enables pupils to deepen and develop their skills and knowledge over time, building on prior learning
 - all teachers insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' work and tackle errors and misconceptions at the earliest opportunity.
- Raise pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - pupils rapidly acquire and deepen their comprehension skills in reading
 - pupils have frequent opportunities to develop and deepen their skills in writing in a range of subjects and genres
 - teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills to investigate, solve increasingly challenging problems and develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Work closely with parents so that attendance levels rise and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 15 to 16 May 2019

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, three assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), early years leader and safeguarding and attendance officer. The lead inspector met with the head of school performance and chief executive officer from St Chad's Academies Trust and the diocesan improvement adviser. She also held a meeting with three members of the local academy committee. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers before school and with pupils informally in classes and at breaktimes.

The inspectors observed teaching in all classes, except for Year 6 where national tests were taking place. A wide range of pupils' workbooks was scrutinised, including those from Year 2 and Year 6. Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked pupils' phonic knowledge in Year 1. A range of documents was examined, including those relating to pupils' outcomes, attendance and safeguarding. A review of the school's website and its self-evaluation was carried out. An external consultant report, relating to teachers' assessments, was considered. Minutes of trust board meetings were also inspected.

Context

There have been no staffing changes since the previous monitoring inspection in February 2019. However, one member of the teaching staff was absent during the inspection due to illness and the school business manager has recently left the school to take up another post.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has continued to work tirelessly, and with dedication, to drive improvements since the previous monitoring visit. Aply supported by her leadership team, there are notable improvements in parental engagement, attendance systems, identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and accuracy of assessment.

All leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The headteacher has raised staff morale and provided much needed stability in the school. Relationships with parents are increasingly positive and the school continues to be oversubscribed. The assistant headteachers provide good-quality support and training for their colleagues in English, mathematics and special educational needs. This is helping to improve teaching and raise outcomes.

Regular checks of teaching, learning and assessment are carried out by the headteacher. The diocesan improvement adviser and head of school performance

from the trust also conduct termly reviews of teaching. This helps validate the headteacher's judgements and pinpoint where further support or action is needed, to improve individual teachers' performance. Coaching and mentoring provided by leaders has led to improved practice for some teachers, but not all. The headteacher and trust representatives are clear where further weaknesses lie and are continuing to monitor, support and take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils are taught well and make good progress. While the assistant headteachers are fully involved in providing support and training for their colleagues in their respective areas, they have not been involved in observing teaching. This is because time has not been made available due to their teaching commitments. This has reduced the capacity of leaders to improve teaching in all year groups.

All staff, including teaching assistants, have clear and measurable performance management targets. These are aimed at raising achievement and further developing their expertise. Targets are challenging and relevant to individuals and the classes they teach. While ongoing evidence is gathered towards these targets, leaders have not, to date, met formally with staff to review the objectives set. Consequently, leaders are unaware how many staff will achieve their performance targets or if any objectives need modification.

Trust leaders, including members of the local governing body, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The recent school review recognises the successes of the school and identifies clearly where further action is needed. The report is realistic and honest and focused closely on the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted. It does not, however, pinpoint precisely enough which cohorts are underachieving or which staff members remain a concern.

Good attention has been given to developing the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. All national curriculum subjects are taught, with the exception of modern foreign languages. Opportunities to write in different subjects have increased. Music continues to be a strength of the school. All pupils learn a musical instrument and take exams in musical performance. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and concentration when playing steel pans in whole-class lessons. Year 5 pupils also hugely enjoyed their two-day residential visit and the activities they participated in.

The leadership of SEND is increasingly effective. The SENCo works in close collaboration with the pastoral team to ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are fully met. Staff have received training in setting targets for pupils and writing individual education plans. Increased awareness and accurate assessment have led to improved identification of SEND pupils. Thirteen pupils are currently being put forward for education, health and care plans due to the severe nature of their difficulties. This demonstrates leaders' strong commitment to ensuring that pupils' needs are now being met and additional support is provided. However, in line with the other assistant headteachers, the SENCo has a teaching commitment and does not have sufficient release time to enable her to monitor provision closely enough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Senior leaders have successfully begun to eradicate weaknesses in teaching. Effective teaching is evident in Years 2, 4 and 6 and pupils are making better progress this year. Teacher assessments are also accurate in these year groups. 'Page toppers' introduced ensure that teachers set a clear learning objective and identify next steps in pupils' learning. Accountability is incorporated with teachers initialling work they mark and identifying how much support pupils have been provided with.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They use appropriate technical vocabulary and model tasks well. Most teachers plan together so pupils in mixed year groups receive the same input as their peers. Standards of presentation are much improved. Books are well presented and pupils take pride in their work. Handwriting is practised regularly and as a result, most pupils' handwriting is neat and legible.

Progression and pace of learning remain an issue in most year groups, including in the early years. Too often, teachers do not check that pupils have understood a concept before moving them on. For example, some pupils lacked the ability and confidence to round numbers during a mathematics activity but were moved on to using inverse operation, without adults checking that pupils had mastered the first skill. This creates gaps in pupils' learning. When the pace of teaching slows, pupils become restless and disengaged. This leads to low-level disruption in lessons. The use of support staff is also inconsistent. Where it is used well, pupils make good gains in their learning. However, on occasion, teaching assistants provide too much support and do the work for the pupils. This limits pupils' independence and resilience and they become too reliant on adult support.

There are some positive signs of improvement in pupils' reading. Many pupils read regularly at both home and school. Reading diaries are used effectively and staff keep a close eye on these. New books purchased are helping to develop pupils' love of reading and are having an impact. Often, pupils have more than one book to extend their reading range. This adds to their engagement and enjoyment of reading. Daily comprehension activities are set. This is helping pupils develop their levels of understanding. Pupils in Year 1 are increasingly confident in using their phonic knowledge to break down and sound out tricky words. However, a small number of teacher assessments of pupils' abilities in phonics in Year 1 are not accurate.

There is good evidence in pupils' books that they write across a range of subjects. Pupils have more opportunities to write at length in subjects such as religious education than previously. However, pupils are still provided with too many writing frames and worksheets. This curtails their progress and limits the amount they write independently.

In mathematics, pupils are beginning to use more problem-solving and reasoning skills. Effective use is made of resources to support pupils' visualisation skills. However, many pupils have weak communication skills and struggle to explain their thinking verbally or describe how they reach their answers. Further work is also needed to enhance pupils' mental arithmetic skills as pupils lack speed and automaticity in this aspect.

Positive relationships exist between staff and children in the early years. Following the previous monitoring visit, the leader has incorporated more activities and purchased resources, which appeal to boys. Activities such as threading nuts and bolts together interest boys and help develop their fine motor skills. However, the attainment gap between boys and girls remains wide. Only a third of boys compared to over two-thirds of girls are on track to reach a good level of development. Children are appropriately grouped for phonic teaching. Many have a secure knowledge of pure sounds.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The headteacher, well supported by the attendance officer, is taking a firm stance regarding rates of attendance and persistent absence. Effective systems are in place to follow up pupils not in school. Improved relationships and engagement with parents are also having a positive impact. Many parents now understand the importance of regular attendance and bring their children back to school after a medical appointment. Pupils enjoy the incentives and rewards offered for good attendance, for example attendance stickers and badges. Consequently, there are an increasing number of pupils whose attendance is 100%. Leaders regularly analyse the attendance of each class and target the lowest-attending families. Latest attendance figures provided by the school indicate that attendance is rising and moving closer towards the national average. Pupils with SEND attendance is above the national average. This is a significant improvement from recent years.

Pupils' and parents' views of the school are very positive, especially about the new leadership team. They say that behaviour is improving. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school and like the 'stand up' time in Friday assemblies, which praises their good work and behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities, such as members of the 'safeguarding team' to help other pupils at playtimes. Nurture group also makes a positive contribution in accommodating pupils with emotional and behaviour problems at lunchtime. Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving, but there are still incidents of low-level disruption in classrooms when teaching does not stimulate or interest pupils. Some behaviour at playtimes is also too boisterous, especially when pupils are in small confined areas of the playground.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders are developing a more thorough approach to assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Assessments are moderated internally and by external consultants. Inspectors agree with the external moderation that current Year 2 and Year 6 assessments are accurate. These indicate that Year 2 are on track to be broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Teacher assessments and inspection evidence for Year 6 indicate that reading, writing and mathematics remain below the national average but a higher proportion of pupils are working at age-related expectations than in 2018.

External support

St Chad's Academy Trust and the diocesan adviser are providing effective challenge and support for school leaders and staff. They help to confirm leaders' judgements of teaching and leadership and management. They also hold leaders fully to account through regular raising achievement board meetings and progress board meetings. Leaders are positive about the working relationship they have with the trust.