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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 to your school on 8–9 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 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 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 third monitoring inspection on 8 October 9 October 2019

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal; subject leaders for reading, mathematics and special educational needs; the safeguarding and attendance officer and groups of teachers and pupils. The inspector also met with two representatives from St Chad's Academies Trust, the diocesan improvement adviser and three members of the local academy committee. The inspector focused in depth on leaders' work to develop the school's curriculum.

Context

Since the previous visit, four teachers have left the school and four have joined. A new business manager has also been appointed.

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

Leaders have continued to make improvements since the last monitoring inspection. The school is moving in the right direction. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and have raised their expectations. They have thought carefully about how to improve the quality of education for all pupils. This has led to leaders redesigning the curriculum. Interesting topics link and develop pupils' skills in different subject areas, such as science, history and geography. This is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and engagement in lessons. French has been introduced for pupils in key stage 2. The curriculum now has greater breadth and balance. It provides pupils with a broader range of knowledge and skills.

Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is much improved. Planning ensures that learning is sequenced in the right order so that pupils build their knowledge and skills gradually. Subjects such as religious education and music are areas of strength. Pupils have regular experience of these subjects and develop their knowledge progressively. However, teachers' planning of other subjects is less successful. Some subjects, such as art and design technology, have not been taught regularly in recent years. Teachers' subject knowledge is therefore weaker in these areas and pupils have not developed the skills expected for their age. The computing curriculum has not been implemented fully due to a lack of computer equipment in the school.

The presentation of pupils' work is improving. Most books are well presented. Coloured lines in exercise books help pupils to keep their handwriting neat. However, a small number of pupils still have poor pencil grip. Adults do not intervene early enough to correct this. As a result, some pupils have poor pencil control and their pencil grip is fixed and hard to change. Teachers have worked hard to pick up and address misconceptions. Time is set aside to go back over work

which pupils have not understood. 'Tags' are also clipped to pupils' books. These pinpoint areas pupils need to revisit and correct. This is helping to eradicate gaps in pupils' learning.

Reading is a whole-school priority. Leaders have invested in new reading books, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) books. Daily reading takes place in all classes and children learn phonics from the outset. A love of reading is promoted through daily story time for younger pupils and sharing class texts. Home reading books are well matched to pupils' abilities. Staff check reading diaries to make sure that pupils read regularly. Pupils who do not read at home are heard read in school. Reading lessons are timetabled every day for older pupils. These focus on complex skills, including comprehension. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge well to break down tricky words. While phonics is taught each day in the Reception class, sessions are often quite short. The link to writing is also underdeveloped. This means that children do not get enough time to practise and develop their early literacy skills.

Writing remains weak across the school. Approximately half of pupils did not reach the standards expected at the end of each key stage in 2019. Topic work provides pupils with more opportunities to write in different subjects. Pupils' motivation to write has increased as they find the subject matter interesting. For example, pupils enjoyed creating fact files about penguins as part of their 'Is it dark in an igloo?' topic. However, their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is still poor.

Pupils' mathematical skills are improving. More pupils reached the levels expected at the end of Year 6 in 2019 than the two previous years. This is because teachers plan activities that match pupils' abilities. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their knowledge in the right order. The context for using mathematics is taught well. Links are made to real-life situations. For example, Year 6 pupils know that negative numbers are used in relation to cold temperatures and spending more money than you have.

Teachers take into account pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when planning learning. Additional resources and adult support are provided during lessons to help pupils achieve well. The SEND leader monitors provision carefully. She has developed good links with other professionals. Training, advice and support are provided for staff. However, there are no catch up programmes in reading and mathematics in place to help pupils with SEND who need this extra help. Leaders are aware of this. They are investigating which programmes are most suitable and likely to have the greatest impact.

Work is ongoing to try and improve pupils' attendance. Leaders continue to commission external support to help tackle persistent absence. Incentives and rewards are offered to encourage pupils to attend regularly. This is having a small degree of success. Attendance improved marginally last year and there was a reduction in the numbers of pupils who were repeatedly absent. Nevertheless, some

families continue to take holidays during term time. As a result, attendance remains below the national average and continues to be an area for development for the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher continues to lead with conviction and a clear sense of direction. Leadership capacity has been strengthened since the previous monitoring inspection, Additional leadership time has been allocated to the school's three assistant headteachers. This has allowed them to focus more sharply on curriculum development, improving teaching and raising achievement. There are early signs of impact through improved staff knowledge and pupils' engagement and behaviour. While roles and responsibilities of staff are generally clear, there is an overlap of some roles, such as reading and the management of special educational needs. Also, following the redesign of the curriculum, some subjects do not yet have a subject leader. The headteacher is currently considering how to address this.

Leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. Training, support from the trust and coaching of staff have been successful. As a result, teaching continues to improve. All staff are held closely to account by the headteacher. Annual targets are set and linked to school priorities. This year, staff targets are rightly focused on curriculum development.

The learning culture within the school is positive. Staff feel their views are listened to and there is a strong sense of teamwork. They appreciate the support and training provided by leaders. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being. They have made adaptations to the school's marking policy. This has helped reduce teachers' workload. All staff contribute to ensuring that pupils are happy, safe and well supported. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Senior leaders work together as a cohesive team. They have clear plans in place to address weaknesses. They check the quality of teaching regularly and provide good levels of support for staff. New resources and coaching are helping to improve the education provided.
- Leaders' review of curriculum design and planning has improved the breadth and balance of subjects taught
- Training and changes made to the planning and delivery of mathematics are helping to bring about improved outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Staff are increasingly confident in teaching this subject.
- A greater focus on reading and significant investment in new books is helping pupils to enjoy reading more and become fluent readers.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils lack age-appropriate skills in subjects such as art, design technology and French. This is because, until recently, the curriculum has not been broad and balanced, and pupils have not been taught the skills needed.
- Limitations to the school's information technology infrastructure has restricted teachers' ability to teach the national curriculum computing requirements. The school has an ineffective server which limits pupils' use of computers. This server is due to be replaced.
- Limited time is allocated in the early years for phonics teaching. The teaching of writing is not interwoven with the teaching of letters and sounds.
- Writing is not taught well and needs further development. Too few pupils are able to use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in line with their age. There is no clear approach as to how pupils can improve their writing.
- The lack of short, sharp, intervention programmes, focused on reading and mathematics, means that too few of the lowest-ability pupils and those with SEND catch up quickly.

External support

The school is receiving additional support from Lindens Teaching School for reading. Funding has been allocated for school leaders to work with a specialist leader of education. Following discussion and a visit to the school, a series of actions and training have been compiled. This action plan has not yet been implemented so it is too early to judge its impact. The trust board and diocese continue to provide good levels of challenge and support for school leaders.