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27 September 2018

Miss Kirsteen Craig
Principal
The Kingfisher School
Lichfield Road
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Bristol
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Dear Miss Craig,

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Kingfisher School

Following my visit with Marion Borland, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 11 to 12 September 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in May 2017. 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 not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for City of Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2017

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that:
 - leaders develop clear systems that all staff follow so that leaders can accurately check the progress pupils make
 - governors have the skills and knowledge to be able to hold the school's leaders to account more rigorously for the performance of all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - leaders provide the training and support for subject leaders so that they have the skills to raise standards in their subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils in their class to enable them to make accelerated progress
 - rapid progress is made by all groups of pupils across the school, especially the most able, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils
 - pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need to overcome the additional barriers they face
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate across the curriculum and that they use this knowledge to meet pupils' learning needs
 - teachers receive training to improve the quality of their teaching to eradicate the legacy of underachievement and to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
 - teachers use and apply the school's own systems to review pupils' work and to ensure that appropriate challenges are set, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Improve outcomes for children in early years by ensuring that:
 - teaching and learning in Reception Year build on the solid foundation of children's achievement in the Nursery class
 - staff use assessment information to provide activities which build on children's existing skills and allow for rapid progress to be made
 - the proportion of children who achieve the expected standard at the end of the Reception class increases.

An external review of governance and the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 September 2018 to 12 September 2018

Evidence

Inspectors conducted visits to each class alongside school leaders. Inspectors, alongside subject leaders, scrutinised a range of pupils' mathematics and writing books. Inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their views on behaviour and teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspectors scrutinised key documents such as the pupil premium strategy, the school's tracking information and up-to-date attendance information. Inspectors also considered the school's monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as taking into account the training and professional development opportunities made available to staff.

Inspectors held meetings with the principal and assistant principals, one of which was a meeting to discuss the strategy and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer (CEO) and the director of academy improvement. The lead inspector also met with members from the governing body, including the recently appointed chair of governors and the governors responsible for safeguarding and the pupil premium.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, the school has moved into the new building. This exciting new site has inspired the school community as it looks to put its stamp on what is currently a 'blank canvas'. Staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that this transition has been smooth for the pupils. Staffing has been stable since September 2017, when leaders appointed five new teachers. The teaching staff who ended the previous academic year are still in post. This has allowed staff to become more familiar with the school and their specific roles and responsibilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the school was previously inspected in May 2017, the pace of change has been far too slow. Leaders were too slow to complete a review into governance and the pupil premium. This significantly slowed down the school's improvement journey. Furthermore, leaders have failed to tackle underperformance in teaching. However, the principal has developed a leadership team to tackle the improvements required. This has given her more capacity to bring about improvements across the school. Work is in place to develop middle leaders, but this is still in its infancy.

Leaders provide a range of training for staff to improve their practice. Staff speak positively about the training and professional development opportunities provided.

However, the training does not yet fully address the weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, leaders are not checking whether the training provided has improved practice across the school. They acknowledge that this is an aspect of their work which must improve.

Since the last monitoring visit in January 2018, governance has clearly strengthened. The appointment of a new chair of governors has been pivotal. Governors access up-to-date assessment information about the school to enable them to begin to challenge school leaders where underperformance is evident. However, the information governors receive does not accurately pinpoint where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is weak.

The appointment of a governor responsible for the implementation of the pupil premium has resulted in a much sharper and focused strategy for the academic year ahead with a clear aim of improving pupils' outcomes. The strategy would benefit from greater precision so that when evaluating the impact of this work, it is clear where it has been most or least successful.

There is no effective strategy or provision for supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders acknowledge that systems need to develop the effectiveness of monitoring. Leaders acknowledge that the effectiveness of interventions needs to be analysed. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) acknowledges that systems need to be developed so that she is able to effectively monitor the quality of provision for these pupils and their subsequent progress. Plans are in place to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported through the use of individual education plans. It is imperative that these plans are in place by the time of the next monitoring visit.

Leaders' monitoring has provided secure evidence to identify where teaching, learning and assessment are effective. However, for a range of reasons, leaders have been unable to fully put their monitoring into effect and bring about improvements. Leaders acknowledge that actions have not been rigorous enough. Furthermore, leaders understand that when monitoring, their focus has, at times, been distracted by the procedural aspects of teaching rather than whether it is improving pupils' outcomes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent and remains the biggest obstacle for leaders to tackle. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Across the school, books demonstrate how teachers do not challenge poor presentation, unfinished work and poor handwriting. This results in continually poorly presented work with little sign of improvement. Low expectations also spill into lessons. On occasions, where activities are not well prepared or do not meet the needs of pupils, pupils lose focus and disengage with

the learning. Adults do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their books and in lessons.

Teachers do not consistently make their expectations clear in lessons, and this leads to unnecessary confusion and a lack of purpose to the learning. On occasion, the intended learning does not align with the activities provided, or work is too easy. Pupils' workbooks reflect this, with work correctly completed over a series of lessons with little sign of teachers responding to pupils' increasing knowledge of what they are learning. This is most evident in mathematics.

The school's approach to writing is still not embedded. While there are pockets of practice that are stronger, these are too few. Teachers are not yet clear about how sequences of learning are planned to build on pupils' starting points and ensure progress. In some cases, the teaching of writing fails to inspire pupils. It is too focused on grammatical features, which results in pupils using these features but without any clear purpose or understanding. The literacy leader has a clear understanding about which adults would benefit from support to improve their practice but has been too slow to act.

Teachers are not yet making the most of support staff in lessons. In some cases, teachers do not direct support staff well enough. This reduces their impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress. Where adults support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, this is stronger but still requires attention. There is some good practice, but more must be done to spread this across the school so that all pupils benefit.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils behave well in and around the school. There is a clear sense of order and transitions throughout the day are well organised so that little time is wasted. Pupils arrive in lessons on time and calmly. However, in some classes, this calm sense of purpose is not maintained. Adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low, leading to low-level disruption which prevents pupils' engagement with the learning activity. Furthermore, teachers do not promote a 'love of learning'. Pupils' attitudes to learning require further attention.

Leaders have effectively reduced exclusion rates across the school. They have developed staff's understanding of pupils' barriers to learning. This has led to adults dealing with pupils' challenging behaviour more effectively. Absence rates have also reduced across the school. Attendance information from the previous academic year shows that the school's attendance rates are now almost in line with national averages. However, there is still a difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, with the latter attending school more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' outcomes have improved since the previous inspection. There have been notable improvements in children's attainment by the end of Reception Year, resulting in an increased proportion of children reaching a good level of development. However, there is still a significant gap between the proportion of children achieving the early learning goals and national averages. Outcomes in phonics have improved, and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard is now in line with national averages.

Outcomes by the end of key stages 1 and 2 have also improved. A greater proportion of pupils are working at the standards expected for their age and progress has improved in mathematics. However, progress in reading and writing still requires attention as many pupils are not making sufficient progress. The reason for this is mainly due to the varying quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. This results in significant 'catch-up' being needed for pupils as they begin Year 6. Leaders acknowledge that this is not sustainable and can only improve when the quality of teaching is more consistent.

Across the school, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard has increased from previous years. There is evidence of challenging activities for pupils, but this is not yet embedded across each class, particularly for most-able pupils. Pupils' workbooks show how, at times, there is very little difference in the activities provided for these pupils. This results in fewer pupils working at the higher standard than are capable of doing so.

External support

The school has been receiving support from Venturers Trust. While some of this support has been useful, it has not focused enough on raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Support has lacked urgency and monitoring has been far too reliant on the school's tracking information to determine whether the school is making the improvements needed. The trust has taken too much comfort in the school's performance information. While performance has improved in places, the trust's expectations are not high enough. Complacency has crept in since the last visit. This has led to a period of inaction. While some improvements are evident, the trust has been too effusive in its praise for the school. The pace of improvement has been too slow. As a result of this, the principal has sought external support from outside the trust to validate her work and provide challenge.

The newly appointed CEO for the trust is aware of the challenges the school faces and acknowledges that support from the trust has previously lacked the rigour required. There have been aspects of the school that have remained unnoticed, an example being the trust's lack of awareness of the quality of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The trust does not know the school's performance well enough and has missed significant areas of the school's work which required

immediate attention after the previous inspection. As it stands, there is a lack of cohesion between the school and the trust.