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Mr Naresh Chandla
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Chandla

Special measures monitoring inspection of Seva School

Following my visit to your school on 13 and 14 June 2017 with Philip Hamilton, Ofsted Inspector, 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 September 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement 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.

I strongly recommend that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

Urgently improve leadership, management and governance by:

- resolving the misunderstanding, misplaced priorities and lack of trust that exist between leaders, governors and staff
 - improving communication and cooperation across the school community
 - agreeing upon a permanent leadership structure
 - ensuring that roles and responsibilities of governors, leaders and staff are clearly understood and that no one exceeds their authority or neglects their duties
 - making sure that systems for managing staff performance are sufficiently rigorous and applied with fairness and consistency
 - ensuring that the requirement to publish information about how the school meets its public sector equality duty is published on the school's website.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Make sure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met in order to ensure pupils' safety and welfare across the whole school by:
 - urgently carrying out all the required checks on staff
 - making sure that pupils' school records, including admissions, medical information, academic performance and home contact details, are kept up to date and accessible to the right people at the right time
 - making sure that all staff understand their duty of care to safeguard pupils and do not obstruct this vital aspect of the school's work.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum so that all groups of pupils, especially the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the best possible progress, by:
 - implementing consistent, reliable and effective assessment procedures in all year groups, including the early years
 - making sure that staff have access to regular training and feedback about the quality of their work.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 13 June 2017 and 14 June 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. We met with you; the headteacher (primary); the deputy headteacher (secondary); other leaders; members of staff; three members of the new board of trustees, including the vice-chair of the trust; and three groups of pupils. The chair of the trust was not available at the time of the monitoring visit.

Context

Since your appointment as whole-school acting headteacher from May 2017, the two external consultants (who had been working with the school since September and October 2016 as interim virtual executive principal and interim virtual deputy executive principal respectively) have left the school. The acting headteacher (secondary) has reverted to his substantive post as deputy headteacher (secondary).

A number of new middle leadership and teaching post appointments have been made in secondary, including for pastoral support, transition and science. Some of these staff have only very recently started. Other postholders are due to begin in September 2017. In primary, the early years coordinator has been on long-term absence since May 2017. There have been changes to teaching staff in Year 1.

Governance arrangements have been very recently reorganised following a review and recommendations from the Department for Education. There are now five members and 11 trustees.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since your very recent appointment as acting headteacher, there is now coherence in the senior leadership team, all of whom are clear about their roles. There is extra capacity in the secondary phase following the appointment of additional leadership posts. It is too early to see the impact of these appointments, however.

Communication and trust between the team and with the trustees has significantly improved. The new trustees appointed bring a wealth of experience and expertise in education. They have already started to challenge leaders with rigour on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

A new leadership structure has been put in place for September 2017 with a view to appointing a permanent headteacher in April 2018. Your appointment until then has enabled the school to enter a period of stability and consolidation before these

changes take effect. Plans are well established for the new Years 6 and 9 cohorts to start in September 2017.

The 41 parents who responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school. A very large majority said that they would recommend the school to another parent.

Some leadership appointments have not yet been made; for example, there are very few subject leaders in secondary. A newly appointed leader for teaching and learning does not take up their post until September 2017. Leadership responsibility for pupil groups is underdeveloped. The long-term arrangements for leadership of special educational needs have still to be resolved. Senior leaders do not exercise oversight of pupil premium spending, nor the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The school meets all of its safeguarding duties and responsibilities. The single central record is fully compliant and leaders ensure that there is a culture of vigilance among staff around the school. Staff know what to do if there is a potential safeguarding incident. Pupils spoken to reported that they feel very safe in school. This was confirmed by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View. Designated leaders are well trained for their roles. They ensure that all records are kept in a timely way and that procedures are correctly followed when recruiting staff.

Leaders have been rigorous in making changes in teaching where required. New appointments have led to recent improvements in the quality of teaching, especially in the secondary phase. The early years provision has been significantly enhanced in recent weeks. Teaching in the primary phase is also improving.

An extensive programme of training and development for teachers has been introduced recently, focusing on teaching issues in the classroom, such as differentiation and questioning. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are at an early stage of development. However, leaders' feedback from observations of teaching is now more rigorous, enhanced by the introduction of paired observations. Teachers do not yet receive written feedback from senior leaders. Teachers are not yet held to account for the progress of pupils and pupil groups as the assessment system to monitor pupil progress is still in its infancy.

Leaders have developed an assessment tracking system in secondary to complement that which is already established in the primary phase. This new system is at a very early stage of development, however. Leaders have set aspirational targets for secondary pupils based on predicted outcomes. In both phases, the accuracy of the pupil performance information provided by teachers has not been verified through sufficient moderation and checking. Consequently there are, at times, inconsistencies between the quality of teaching and the recorded progress of pupils.

There is still a lack of clarity about the number of pupils on the special educational needs register. The number according to leaders is much smaller than that recorded on pupil performance information in the primary phase. As a result, there is no accurate evaluation of the impact of special educational needs provision and outcomes. Governors do not have a clear enough picture of the impact of funding.

Governors have not evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding and are unaware of how well disadvantaged pupils are doing. Leaders have not provided an up-to-date report on the impact of funding, nor set a strategy for its use this academic year.

The information published on the website has been improved concerning provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the curriculum in the secondary phase. There is still no curriculum information published for pupils in Years 4 and 5. In the secondary phase, there are no curriculum details for food technology or design and technology. Information on the website is still not up to date for governance, pupil premium, physical education and sport premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.

Leadership of English as an additional language is underdeveloped. Few pupils have so far been accurately assessed for their fluency in English. Teachers have little information about these pupils in their lesson plans.

Leaders have not ensured that teachers' application of the school's policy on written feedback is consistent in having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Opportunities for music taught through the mainstream curriculum are very limited, although pupils enjoy the after-school enrichment activities.

The primary library contains very few suitable books and resources for older pupils in key stage 2.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching is much improved, particularly in the secondary phase. In primary and early years, teachers and additional adults teach phonics effectively. This ensures that pupils are well equipped with the skills they need to develop their reading.

In early years, children are fully involved with their learning in an attractive environment where they are provided with an extensive range of indoor and outdoor activities.

Teachers in primary and secondary phases are using an extending range of questioning strategies to elicit detailed answers from pupils and engage their

interest. In the best examples, teachers build on pupils' replies to develop their thinking further.

Pupils are now taking part with more enthusiasm in their food technology and art lessons, which they previously did not enjoy. In one secondary lesson, pupils relished preparing ingredients to make a cheese and potato pie.

In the primary phase, teachers from the same year group are planning more collaboratively together. Teachers across the school now identify pupils from different groups, such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, high-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils, when they are planning lessons.

In secondary science, a pupil's specific learning needs had been identified and the strategies used to overcome the barriers were identified and applied, for example providing word lists to support learning. Elsewhere, teachers' planning does not go further than simply identifying which group pupils belong to. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are rarely identified.

In mathematics, pupils generally have opportunities to solve mathematical challenges and problems set at varying levels of difficulty. For example, in key stage 2, high-attaining pupils had a very challenging problem to solve which they took on with relish, appointing their own leaders and discussing maturely how they could find the answer. However, this level of challenge is not typical and high-attaining pupils are often not sufficiently stretched. They are, at times, either made to wait in lessons until all pupils know what they have to do, or they are interrupted in their work as the teacher stops the whole class to explain a point which the high-attaining pupils know already. A number of primary pupils spoken to said that although they enjoy mathematics lessons, they often find them too easy.

At times, the pace of learning is slow where activities go on for too long or do not enable pupils to work in greater depth.

Some weaknesses remain in the teaching of humanities in the secondary phase.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils have the opportunities to develop leadership skills as 'primary leaders' and 'Seva buddies'. They have been appointed to look after younger children, resolve conflicts with pupils in the playground and raise money for charity.

In lessons and around the school, pupils behave very well. At times, they are almost too compliant so that if they are asked to do low-level work or an uninspiring activity they do so willingly without complaint. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are good. Patterns of good learning behaviour have been

established in early years. Children have significantly improved their behaviour there and settled into classroom routines well.

Pupils spoken to said that behaviour in school was good and parents responding to Parent View agreed with this. A small number of pupils spoken to said that they had been bullied but when it had happened, it was invariably resolved after the pupil spoke to a teacher or the headteacher.

Outcomes for pupils

Information provided by leaders indicates that pupils in Years 7 and 8 have not made sufficient progress from their starting points at the end of key stage 2, especially in mathematics, geography, history and Spanish. Not enough most-able pupils are on track to achieve the highest possible outcomes.

However, the assessment information provided by teachers has not yet been verified. Evidence from pupils' books and from more recent teaching indicates that pupils, including those from different pupil groups, have started to make more rapid progress.

In the primary phase, the school's outcomes for pupils in Years 1 to 5 are as yet unverified. However, they indicate that most pupils are on track to make expected progress, although with some variation across year groups. The mismatch in numbers on the special educational needs register makes it hard to confirm their progress.

Those eligible for pupil premium funding in the primary classes have not made as much progress as other groups of pupils. They are not on track to diminish the difference in attainment with other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.

Assessment systems in early years are now more rigorous and accurate. The proportion of children set to achieve a good level of development by the end of the school year compares favourably with national expectations and is a significant improvement on previous outcomes.

External support

Leaders and trustees are now engaging more openly with the local authority and the regional schools commissioner. Representatives from both have made visits to the school and reported positively on the effective progress being made by leaders.

The school has continued to work with local national leaders of education on monitoring and training activities.

- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken before the next monitoring visit in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.