

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Jane Morgan
Headteacher (Primary Phase)
Seva School
Link House
Eden Road
Walsgrave Triangle
Coventry
CV2 2TB

Dear Ms Morgan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Seva School

Following my visit to your school on 14–15 March 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2016.

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.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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 governing body, 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 first monitoring inspection on 14 March 2017 to 15 March 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, the acting headteacher (secondary), interim virtual deputy executive principal, other leaders and members of staff, three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and the chair of the trust, two groups of pupils, and the headteacher of a local school working in partnership with you. The interim virtual executive principal was not available at the time of the monitoring visit.

Context

The previous executive principal, who was absent at the time of the last inspection, left the school in October 2016. Two external consultants, who had been working with the school since September and October 2016 respectively, were appointed from November 2016 as interim virtual executive principal and interim deputy executive principal respectively, both working for two days a week. The deputy headteacher (secondary phase) is still acting headteacher (secondary phase) following the departure of the secondary phase headteacher, who left after one week in post in September 2016.

A number of other staff left before Christmas 2016, including six teachers (two in the primary phase and four in the secondary), the special educational needs coordinator and two members of the administrative staff, including the business manager who previously had responsibility for maintaining safeguarding records.

A new special educational needs coordinator was appointed from October 2016. A new middle leadership team has been expanded to add to the early years coordinator, international primary curriculum coordinator and primary data manager, who have all been in post since September 2016. These include the appointment of a pastoral manager (who is also the school's designated safeguarding lead) in October 2016, English and mathematics coordinators and a key stage 1 leader (all appointed during the spring term 2017). The pastoral manager and special educational needs coordinator work across both phases. The other middle leaders are in the primary phase only.

A new senior business manager was appointed in February 2017. There are a number of vacant teaching posts, especially in the secondary phase and consequently a number of classes are being taught by temporary staff. Interviews for some of these posts were taking place during the monitoring visit.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and governors have tackled with rigour issues raised in the last inspection concerning a lack of trust and having no agreed clear vision. As a result of recent staffing and leadership changes, leaders and governors are now working together in an environment of mutual trust and respect. Leaders and governors are focused together on strengthening leadership, improving outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching in the school.

Staff spoken to during the visit were supportive of leaders and governors and shared the direction in which you and the governors are seeking to take the school. Leaders believe there are now no staff in the school who are obstructive or who do not share the ethos and values of the school. Although the school was set up as a Sikh faith school, appointments of non-Sikh leaders, teachers and governors have been made and pupils from non-Sikh faith backgrounds are on the roll of the school. They have established an ethos where Sikh and Seva's values (service, excellence, virtues and aspiration) complement and contribute to the promotion of British values. For example, the school follows the local authority's agreed religious education syllabus where pupils study a wide range of religions other than Sikhism.

Communication between governors and leaders is much improved. However, staff and leaders can have a different understanding over what is happening concerning leadership and governance of the school. This is where some decisions have been taken very recently or have not been ratified by the Department for Education (DfE) and so have not yet been communicated to the wider school. Otherwise, there is a culture of openness and transparency in the school, as evidenced in your recent report to governors. Minutes from previous governing body meetings indicate that governors had been asking challenging questions, especially around outcomes for pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding. Only since the autumn term 2016 have they received such detailed information and analysis on progress for pupils in the primary phase. Such information is not yet available in the secondary phase.

A permanent leadership structure is still to be resolved. Governors are working closely with the DfE to restructure the governing body from its current arrangement where all five members are trustees and all trustees are governors. Governors are pursuing the changes in order to introduce a level of scrutiny and accountability for the governing body but at the time of the inspection visit the changes had not been confirmed by the DfE. An external review of governance has not taken place while the restructuring arrangements are taking place. No decision has been taken about whether an executive principal will be appointed as this is linked to future decisions about whether the multi-academy trust will take on additional schools. Governors are clearer about their roles and the activities they can and cannot be involved with.

Senior leaders are not clear about their roles in terms of seniority. The headship of the secondary phase had still not been resolved at the time of the visit. Interim

arrangements have been arranged, to be followed by an external advertisement for the post. It is not clear whether the secondary or primary phase headteacher is more senior or whether another executive principal will be appointed. For accounting and external communicating purposes, you have assumed the role as the longer-standing post holder and because the secondary role is an acting role fulfilled by the secondary deputy headteacher.

The primary phase is in the very early stages of developing a middle leadership team to support you and extend leadership capacity. There is no such equivalent team in secondary where leadership is less well developed. There is not a substantive headteacher in post and no middle leaders to act as coordinators and subject leaders in the secondary phase. A number of teaching vacancies are still to be filled.

Too much responsibility is falling on the shoulders of the deputy headteacher who is acting headteacher (secondary). The school is reliant on support from the consultants acting in leadership roles who recognise their aim is to reduce the dependency on them. The school has established a joint leadership post across primary and secondary for pastoral support and safeguarding which has provided some additional capacity in the secondary phase.

The roles and lines of demarcation are not yet clear within the developing middle leadership team in primary. For example, those middle leaders spoken to were not yet clear whether future leadership for phonics would fall to the early years coordinator, the key stage 1 leader or literacy coordinator. Governors are still negotiating with staff over contracts in order to resolve issues such as Saturday working.

As a result of increased rigour in performance management, there were a number of changes to staffing personnel during the autumn term 2016. In the primary phase, there is support and challenge in place to address remaining weak teaching, linked to the external support from the partner school. There is no equivalent yet in the secondary phase. Systems for monitoring teaching are not consistent across the primary and secondary phases. In the secondary stage, there is a system for grading teaching based on classroom observations, work in pupils' books and pupil progress information. It is not fully transparent as staff do not see the grades or the criteria for the grades, for example those linked to pupil performance. Developing middle leaders are too new in their roles to have been involved in monitoring teaching. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

The school does not meet its statutory requirements to publish specific information on its website on the curriculum, the pupil premium, the Year 7 literacy and catch-up premium, the physical education (PE) and sport premium and special educational needs. It does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies and free schools should publish on these aspects. Leaders have not sufficiently evaluated pupil

outcomes and the impact of funding on provision for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up.

Since the last inspection, it has published an equality and diversity statement on the website about how it meets its public-sector equality duty. This is to be reviewed again in October 2017.

In the secondary section, there is no curriculum information available for PE, music, or drama. There are trips for science such as 'Big Bang' for Year 8 but little else in other subject areas.

Leaders have tackled the issues of safeguarding raised by the previous report. A senior designated safeguarding lead is in place supported by other senior leaders and a new senior business manager. All required checks are carried out on staff, visitors and governors as well as applicants for advertised posts. Consequently, the school now meets its safeguarding duties.

Records are held securely and in a timely fashion on pupils. Staff spoken to understand their role to be vigilant and have benefited from training to fulfil their duties. Suitable checks have been made to ensure they have read the latest information and guidance.

The school has undertaken external reviews to hold itself up to scrutiny to ensure it is doing all it can to promote the culture of safeguarding in school, including in early years. Where any outstanding issues have been identified, they have been swiftly addressed. Governors understand their duties, which they have undertaken with diligence and rigour in order to make appropriate checks that the school is fulfilling its statutory duties.

The 41 parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, were mostly positive. The very large majority said pupils were safe and well behaved and most parents said that they would recommend the school to another parent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The appointment of a primary data manager has enhanced the analysis and evaluation of pupil performance information and assessment procedures in Years 1 to 5 and the accountability of teachers. Your highly detailed report to governors has given governors a clear and accurate picture of how pupils are doing in each year group and pupil group.

You have been forthright and honest in your evaluation that previous assessment information was unreliable and inaccurate, particularly in early years. The early years assessment system is now aligned to that of pupils in Years 1 to 5 so that it is

possible to track pupil progress. According to the school's current figures, 50% of pupils are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the academic year. The early years environment has been significantly refurbished and an outdoor area has been laid although there is still further work to do.

Leaders in the primary years are working towards greater standardisation and moderation in assessment procedures through working in partnership with a local successful school. Assessment information in the secondary phase is at an early stage of development. There is no equivalent data manager in secondary so the analysis of assessment information falls to the acting headteacher (secondary phase). The secondary phase is still in the process of moving from one assessment system to another so it is hard to evaluate from the information received how well pupils in Years 7 and 8 are doing. Targets set previously under the old system are neither challenging nor aspirational and are not clearly understood by pupils.

Primary staff, including middle leaders, are now getting access to training, support and monitoring of their teaching, through the partnership and networks established with a local successful school. Training is less well developed in the secondary phase where the leadership is underdeveloped and a number of staff have either very recently been appointed or are not yet in place.

Pupils in the secondary phase reported some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in some subjects and also the poor quality of classroom control of some of the temporary staff.

Leaders in the primary years have identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and know that it is not yet consistently good. Now there is a consistent assessment system in place within the phase it is possible to identify in which year groups pupils are making good progress and where they are not.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils behaved well in lessons seen in and around the school and showed positive attitudes to their learning. In a few instances, they were switched off and looked disengaged but no unruly or poor behaviour or inappropriate language was seen or heard. Most pupils spoken to said that behaviour was good and that they felt safe in school. They were clear about rewards and sanctions for behaviour. There have been no exclusions of pupils.

Overall absence is below average and on a two-year improving trend. Persistent absence has increased from none in 2015 but is still well below the national average. The school attributes this to a small number of families taking extended holidays overseas during term time.

Pupils were well informed about other faiths and knew about international and British values such as the rule of law. As a result of the partnership with a local Catholic school, they were aware of Saint Patrick's Day taking place that week. They have studied issues such as the consequences of World War II, poverty in Africa and India and the divide between rich and poor. They have discussed Trump and Brexit in tutor time and held debates with other schools. They have voted for classroom representatives for the school council and have had the opportunity for leadership responsibilities as safeguarding leads and through the appointment of head and deputy boy and girl. They wanted more choice for the enrichment activities, more drama on the curriculum and more clubs in school, especially for sport.

Outcomes for pupils

There are no pupils yet in Years 6 or Years 9 to 11 so no external assessments and examinations have taken place at the end of key stages 2 and 4 since the school opened in 2014.

In early years, the below-average outcomes for children in 2016 were considerably below those in 2015, when they were well above average. This is despite children's broadly similar starting points in both cohorts. Current leaders believe that previous results were not accurate and that more recent results, which were moderated, were more reliable. The 2016 results were attributed to previously identified weak teaching and provision. As a result of new leadership since September 2016, the school's forecasts indicate that children are set to achieve above-average outcomes in 2017.

In key stage 1 assessments in 2016, outcomes were above the nationally expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of year 2. However, they were below average in all three subjects for most-able pupils. There were too few disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to evaluate how well they did.

The one third of pupils identified as speaking English as an additional language did better than those identified as speaking English as a first language at the end of year 2. Almost all the pupils in the school are of Indian origin but leaders acknowledge there was previously some confusion as to how pupils were categorised concerning their first language.

Outcomes in phonics at the end of year 1 and year 2 were above national averages in 2015 and 2016.

According to assessment information provided by the school and from a small number of pupils' books sampled, pupils in key stage 1 are not making enough progress, especially in year 2. The quality of teaching is inconsistent within this phase.

Although there is some inconsistency in key stage 2 as well, particularly in year 5, pupils have made more rapid progress since the end of key stage 1 as a result of some teaching which is good, particularly in year 4.

In the secondary phase, current outcomes based on the school's legacy of using a historical model of national curriculum levels and sublevels indicate that pupils in year 7 and 8 are not making enough progress and that their targets are not sufficiently aspirational. The quality of teaching is variable, with a number of temporary staff in place and several changes to teaching personnel since September 2016 which have affected pupil progress.

Analysis is not broken down by the school for most-able, middle- and lower-attaining pupils so it is not possible to ascertain how most pupils are doing, especially in the secondary phase with the absence of key stage 2 information. There is also a mismatch between the number of pupils on the special educational needs register in the school as a whole (25), held by the special educational needs coordinator, and the number of 60 held by the primary data manager for pupils in Years 1 to 5 alone. Without a clear identification of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, it is not possible to evaluate the progress they are currently making.

Internal assessments are carried out half termly in both the primary and secondary phases but against different assessment systems. As the assessment systems for the secondary years are not yet in place to align with the primary stages it is hard to see how progress is linked to judgements on the quality of teaching. The school only received key stage 2 outcomes for pupils very recently, which again has made it harder to track progress against national benchmarks.

External support

As a result of the school's limited leadership capacity, especially in the secondary phase, two consultants working in the school since September 2016 have assumed part-time leadership roles which are temporary in nature until such time as the school has built up its own capacity. They have successfully supported leaders in the development of a suitable action plan and are holding leaders to account for its implementation. Similarly, they are held to account by governors through weekly reports to the chair of the trust.

In the primary phase, a national leader of education, who is head of a local teaching school, has begun to work with the school since December 2016. This is at an early stage of development but has already identified key areas for development in teaching and established a network of support for teachers and aspiring leaders.

The local authority has engaged with the school to ensure that it is now meeting its safeguarding duties. The school works closely with the local authority on human

resources issues and for legal advice. You attend the local authority network of primary headteacher meetings.

The DfE are liaising with the governing body over a proposed new structure for the trust and the school but this cannot move forward until the school receives approval for the proposed model.