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18 March 2015

Mrs M Davis  
Headteacher  
Walmore Hill Primary School  
Walmore Hill  
Gloucester  
GL2 8LA

Dear Mrs Davis

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Walmore Hill Primary School**

Following my visit with Teresa Day, Associate Inspector, to your school on 17 March 2015, 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 which 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 which took place in January 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching and speed up pupils' progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers have sufficiently high expectations of the quality, presentation and quantity of pupils' work
  - teachers plan lessons that challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the most able
  - teachers regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons so that work can be adapted as required
  - individual pupils' targets are set that help pupils to move on to their next stage of learning with confidence.
  
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by:
  - providing more challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills
  - providing opportunities for pupils to use mathematical knowledge in other subjects
  - making sure that marking clearly identifies the strengths in pupils' work and provides clear guidance about how improvement can be made.
  
- Improve leadership and management so that:
  - all leaders effectively check the quality of teaching and set targets that are directly related to pupils' progress
  - leaders set precise targets with staff for improving their teaching skills and provide appropriate training to help them improve the quality of their teaching
  - systems to track pupils' progress are followed consistently by all staff in order to identify and act upon any underachievement
  - subject leaders are given the opportunity and training to monitor the quality of provision and pupils' learning in their subjects.
  
- Improve governors' skills and knowledge in analysing information on pupils' progress and how it compares with schools nationally, to enable them to challenge leaders more rigorously to improve the standards achieved by pupils.

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

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised relevant documents. Inspectors also met with the executive headteacher and other members of staff, groups of pupils, two governors and a representative from the local authority.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the governing body has discussed a range of options for the school's future leadership. This is because the collaboration with Woodside Primary School will end at the end of August 2015. To lead the school from September 2015, the governing body has advertised for a permanent teaching headteacher.

There have been further staff changes at the school. One teacher left in autumn 2014 and a second leaves at the end of the spring term. An experienced teacher has been seconded to the school on a temporary basis. He has responsibility for leading mathematics and managing the school's special educational needs provision. A second teacher has been appointed on a short-term contract for the summer term to teach the Reception children and Key Stage 1 pupils.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

There is a clear sense of purpose at the school and a strong determination to raise standards. Pupils often apply themselves diligently in lessons as they are keen to do well. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions and little time is lost as pupils work productively on the activities set.

Teachers are using the recently introduced tracking system to record pupils' attainment regularly. The information gathered provides teachers with a good overview of pupils' progress. As a result, teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning.

Work in pupils' books shows that teachers' expectations are higher than previously. Pupils are reacting positively to the increased demands being made of them. They enjoy the challenges being set and most feel confident that they are making good progress. As a result, pupils are tackling more challenging work than was the case last year. Pupils are also taking greater care to check their work and to think about how it can be improved.

The senior leaders' decisions are helping to increase pupils' achievement. The school's greater emphasis on enabling pupils to do well is succeeding. As a result, pupils are making faster progress than was previously the case.

## **The quality of teaching**

Inspection evidence confirms that the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers are planning increasingly challenging activities that help pupils to aspire to higher levels. Teachers are also expecting pupils to apply themselves well during lessons.

Teachers plan activities that take good account of pupils' ages and abilities. Each lesson's learning objectives are displayed clearly. They are written using suitable language that is appropriate to the age of the pupils in the class. At the start of the lesson, teachers explain the activity clearly. However, they are not always explicit enough about the quality and quantity of work pupils are required to complete. As a result, a few pupils do not make sufficient progress. In addition, pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work, which results in careless mistakes being made.

The teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' progress. They often work with designated pupils and support them to complete their work. Pupils appreciate the support provided as it helps them to complete their work successfully. Teaching assistants also support pupils' reading activities. Although they read confidently to pupils, they do not always spend enough time asking probing questions and thereby developing pupils' comprehension skills.

Teachers are implementing the school's marking policy well. Comments are written neatly and the vocabulary used is appropriate for the pupils' ages. Pupils have time during lessons to read teachers' comments and respond to the points being made, which helps them to learn from any errors identified.

Pupils have developmental targets for their English and mathematics work, which they are able to discuss. However, there is little evidence to show that teachers are assessing pupils against their individual targets to determine whether they have been met. Consequently, most target sheets contain little information and pupils do not refer to them.

The classrooms are organised appropriately to support pupils' development. Many of the displays are lively and vibrant and capture the essence of pupils' work. Other examples are dated and are not particularly relevant to the work currently being taught.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. There is a friendly atmosphere across the school. Pupils know each other very well and enjoy spending time together. Behaviour in school is generally good and there are few issues that need resolving. Pupils say that the changes taking place at school have improved pupils' behaviour. They comment that when incidents do

arise, the staff manage the situation quickly and sort things out fairly. As a result, pupils feel safe in school. However, pupils told inspectors that behaviour on the bus that transports them to school is poor.

Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of the equipment and resources. The playground is relatively small but pupils play together well and make good use of the available space.

Pupils with responsibilities take their role seriously and are keen to represent other pupils at the school.

Pupils in the mixed-age classes get on well together. They are respectful and acknowledge that, at times, the teacher needs to work with different year groups. In these situations, pupils working independently often do so quietly. However, on occasion some pupils do disrupt the lesson, which disturbs other pupils in the class.

Pupils generally display good attitudes to learning by applying themselves sensibly to the activities planned. Pupils' work books show that they are cared for but the work produced is not yet of a high enough standard.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The executive headteacher is demonstrating the robust leadership needed to tackle the school's weaknesses. Working closely with the governing body the executive headteacher is implementing the school's improvement plans.

The school's improvement plan focuses appropriately on strengthening the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. The school's leaders have reviewed their procedures to monitor teachers' performance, including setting challenging targets for pupils' achievement. To support teachers and teaching assistants to improve their performance, the executive headteacher has provided staff with focused training opportunities. To monitor the impact of these initiatives, including evaluating the quality of teaching, the executive headteacher observes lessons and monitors pupils' work. As a result, teachers are frequently involved in discussing teaching and its impact on pupils' performance.

The teachers who lead English and mathematics are supporting the school's improvement work well. Both have prepared detailed improvement plans for their respective subjects. To monitor the impact of their work, they often discuss pupils' performance to ascertain whether it is sufficiently challenging and enabling pupils to make good progress. As yet, they have not observed their colleagues teaching in order to determine how well new initiatives are working.

The senior teacher with responsibility for overseeing the progress of pupils with special educational needs is increasing his involvement. Working with the executive headteacher, he has audited the current arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and updated the special needs register. Consequently,

pupils identified as having special educational needs are being assessed more accurately. As a result, the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs has reduced as some pupils had previously been targeted incorrectly.

The school's communication systems to engage with parents are generally appropriate. The school's website is being developed to ensure that it provides useful information. Similarly, the school also provides weekly newsletters as a strategy to inform parents about events and other news. The governors have also undertaken to produce a regular newsletter so that they can inform parents of developments taking place at the school.

The Chair of the Governing Body is working closely with the local authority to ensure that the school is well placed to consider its future. He works very well with the executive headteacher. The governing body benefits from the executive headteacher's detailed reports that provide relevant information about the impact of the school's work.

The governing body is increasingly involved in the school's improvement work. To support the school's development, the governing body has produced a detailed plan to indicate how governors will enhance their skills and strengthen governance. The plan covers the period up to November 2014. Although there is evidence to show that each action has been implemented and evaluated, their improvement plan has not been updated so that governors can build on the progress made.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing high quality support to the school. The local authority advisers' work is valued by the governing body and the school. The advisers visit the school regularly to work with and support staff to develop their leadership skills and to strengthen the quality of teaching. In addition, the advisers monitor the school's progress regularly and provide detailed reports about the improvements taking place.

The local authority has been instrumental in seconding the experienced executive headteacher to support the school's plans for improvement. This strategy has succeeded in helping the school make the progress achieved to date.

The school has also benefited significantly from the collaboration with Woodside Primary School. Staff and governors from the school have provided valuable support and guidance, which has helped to strengthen systems and procedures at Walmore Hill Primary School.

The local authority is currently working closely with the governing body to provide additional guidance and advice as they recruit a permanent headteacher to lead the school.