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18 July 2016

Mrs Anne McCarthy  
Interim Headteacher  
Burrowmoor Primary School  
Burrowmoor Road  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 9RP

Dear Mrs McCarthy

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Burrowmoor Primary School**

Following my visit with Marek Krzanicki, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 28 and 29 June 2016, 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 March 2015. 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.**

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2015**

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to good or better by:
  - planning work that provides the right level of challenge
  - giving pupils clear guidance through feedback about how to improve their work
  - making better use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
  - giving the teaching of writing a stronger focus in the Reception Year.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring all staff have high expectations for pupils
  - improving the rigour of checks on teaching and learning to identify and tackle weaknesses promptly
  - improving the effectiveness of all staff with allocated responsibilities and the governing body in monitoring provision and securing the necessary improvement
  - making better use of the pupil premium to provide the right support for disadvantaged pupils and then checking the effect of this support more closely.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and the presentation of their work by:
  - ensuring that all adults manage behaviour consistently well in lessons and at playtimes
  - helping pupils understand the importance of good behaviour
  - ensuring that pupils always try hard and present their work neatly.

External reviews of governance and the 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 28 and 29 June 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, the executive headteacher, two members of the governing body, two representatives of the sponsor trust, senior leaders, other teachers and pupils. Visits were made to lessons that included an examination of some of the pupils' work.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a substantive headteacher has been appointed, taking up her post in September 2016. The interim headteacher leaves at the end of this term. The leadership team has been restructured for September. Currently, a review of the roles and a restructuring of the teaching assistants are taking place. Recently, two teachers and five teaching assistants left the school and two teachers have started working at the school.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The interim headteacher and executive headteacher continue to provide determined and effective leadership. As a consequence, the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved across the school. Other leaders have received training that has enabled them to refine their leadership skills. They now demonstrate that they are more confident and able to lead school improvement. Important changes to the roles of senior and middle leaders are planned for September when the new headteacher starts. The trust, governors and executive headteacher are aware that clear lines of accountability must be established to ensure that the current improvements to teaching and learning are sustained.

Planned actions for school improvement, including new procedures for checking the quality of the teaching, are providing clear direction for the school towards the removal of special measures. There is a close link between the weaknesses in teaching identified by leaders and the tailored training and coaching that are being provided.

The impact of the use of pupil premium funding is becoming more apparent. There has been useful work by leaders to analyse the impact of interventions to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make better progress. If the activities are not having the desired impact, then they are either disbanded or adjusted to make them more effective.

Governors continue to develop the ability to hold leaders accountable for school improvement. Minutes of governors' meetings show that leaders are subject to pertinent questioning to ensure that the actions they wish to take are in the best interests of the pupils. Governors have worked effectively to oversee the restructuring of the role of teaching assistants and school leaders. Governors are well aware that it will be crucial to keep parents and carers informed of the changes and the rationale behind them in preparation for the new school year.

The current curriculum for science, history and geography is not good enough. It does not enable pupils to learn subject-specific skills in sufficient depth. For example, pupils do not carry out enough experiments in science to develop their skills in investigation. In addition, there is insufficient opportunity within the curriculum for pupils to learn about fundamental British values.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Across key stage 2, pupils now benefit from teaching in reading, writing and mathematics that is enabling them to make better progress than in the past. Expectations are much higher. Teachers are more proficient at checking books to gauge pupils' understanding of previous work, then amending lesson plans accordingly. Lessons are typically taught confidently and purposefully and, as a consequence, pupils are much clearer about what they are learning and work hard.

These improvements are also apparent in key stage 1, but there remains a greater variation in the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, usually because lessons have not been planned carefully enough. However, the work in books shows that, across all classes, pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the last monitoring inspection.

The teaching of writing in the early years has improved considerably this year. Activities are carefully devised to meet the needs of children of all abilities. Disadvantaged children are making progress which is as rapid as that of others. Some who were unable to form letters at the beginning of the year are now writing legible sentences. The most able are encouraged to compose much longer pieces that are correctly spelled and punctuated.

The quality of phonics teaching in the early years and key stage 1 is successfully enabling most pupils to learn to read and write. Pupils were observed rehearsing the sounds that letters make when they were writing. Sometimes, however, important errors such as letters formed incorrectly or key words misspelled are not picked up during the lesson, which means that pupils can be in danger of establishing habits that are hard to change.

Assessment procedures are producing much more reliable information than in the past as teachers have become more adept at measuring pupils' progress accurately.

History, geography and science are not taught well enough. In key stage 1, pupils are given tasks that are generally superficial and that fail to develop subject-specific skills. In Years 3 to 5, pupils have more opportunities to develop skills such as map reading or scientific investigation, but the quality of the work produced does not match that in writing and mathematics lessons. In Year 6, pupils are developing subject-specific skills in more depth and are applying their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning continue to improve. Pupils work hard and show resilience when tackling difficult problems. When working in groups, pupils are cooperative and considerate. Around the school, pupils are polite and behave sensibly. Lunch- and breaktimes are orderly and well supervised.

It is evident that most pupils are taking much greater pride in their work. Handwriting and presentation are much improved in English and mathematics books in most year groups. The school has strengthened the provision of homework that pupils are set by introducing learning logs. Pupils are enthusiastic about homework because they say that they like to have the freedom to complete tasks in the way that they prefer. Some of these logs show work of a high standard as pupils express themselves very creatively.

There remain some pupils whose behaviour has to be carefully managed, and this is accomplished much more successfully than in the past. Disruption in lessons is now less frequent than it was at the time of the last monitoring inspection.

Most pupils demonstrate that they are kind and considerate to each other. However, those spoken to did not have a clear understanding of what we mean by values. They demonstrated only limited understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

All groups of pupils are now making more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics than in the past, as shown by the work in their books. For example, in key stage 2, the quality of their writing is more sophisticated and they are becoming proficient at solving mathematical problems systematically.

In the early years, information shows that there has been an increase this year in the proportion of children that achieve a good level of development. This is in part because of the improvement in their writing, which has been an area of relative weakness.

In key stage 1, pupils have completed the new national assessments and it is unclear at this time whether the improvements in teaching have resulted in raised attainment. However, the work in books indicates that pupils have made more rapid progress since the last monitoring inspection.

By the end of key stage 2, assessment information indicates that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed. In the past, this has been as a result of the extremely good teaching received by pupils in Year 6. Progress across Years 3 to 5 has now also become more rapid.

The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in reading, writing and mathematics is narrowing as teachers and leaders pay more attention to devising activities that better meet their needs.

In some classes, teachers do not challenge the most able to complete work of a high enough quality because expectations are not conveyed explicitly to these pupils. This results in these pupils making slower progress than should be expected.

### **External support**

The trust has brokered some effective external support to strengthen teaching and leadership. This has supported the interim headteacher in her work. School leaders have benefited from close supervision when carrying out their leadership tasks, which has given them the confidence to lead improvement. A consultant has worked closely to coach individual teachers and this has had a marked impact on improving their teaching. Well-planned visits for some staff to observe outstanding practice in other schools have also been helpful and are resulting in teachers adopting the best practice that they have seen in their teaching.