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Mr Naresh Chandla
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Dear Mr Chandla

Special measures monitoring inspection of Seva School

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 November 2017 with Martin Spoor, 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 third 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 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 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 (SEN) 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 third monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 November 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. We met with you; the deputy headteacher (primary); the deputy headteacher (secondary); other leaders; members of staff and four members of the board of trustees, including the vice-chair of the trust. The chair of the trust was not available at the time of the monitoring visit. Inspectors also met two groups of pupils and spoke by telephone to an external partner who is a national lead in education and an executive headteacher of a local multi-academy trust. There were too few responses to Parent View so inspectors took account of a recent school parent questionnaire that had 41 responses. Inspectors conducted joint lesson observations with members of the senior leadership team and scrutinised pupils' books. They checked the school's arrangements for safeguarding.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit trustees have tried unsuccessfully to recruit a permanent substantive headteacher. There is a new deputy headteacher leading primary. This post is temporary for one year in the first instance. The school has appointed four phase coordinators to act as middle leaders. A number of additional teaching posts have been created because the school introduced Year 6 and Year 9 classes for the first time in September 2017.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Under your leadership there is now a clear direction for the school. The appointment of an additional deputy headteacher and four phase leaders is strengthening the school's capacity to improve further. As these post holders are new, it is too early for them to demonstrate the impact their roles are having on the school.

Leaders and governors are working closely together. However, two of the three senior leadership posts are temporary, which leaves a degree of uncertainty about the future direction of the school. A number of appointments have still to be made and there are, at times, long delays between advertising posts and appointing candidates successfully. Lines of responsibility between deputy headteachers and phase coordinators in primary and between teachers and leaders in secondary are not yet clear enough. Trustees know the school well and have a more realistic view of the school's performance than the overgenerous self-evaluation by school leaders.

Senior leaders had an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching during lesson observations with inspectors. However, performance management arrangements are still at an early stage of development. Plans are in place for pupil

progress meetings between senior leaders and teachers but at the time of the inspection visit these had not yet taken place. As a result, teachers are still not yet held fully to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.

The newly appointed key stage coordinators have identified the key targets for development in their areas of responsibility. They have, to varying extents, been involved in lesson observations including, in some instances, providing written feedback to teachers. They have conducted scrutinies of pupils' books but are not yet holding those teachers who do not comply with the school's marking and feedback policy sufficiently to account.

Information on the website is improved. Details indicate that there is now a clear separation in the structure between members and trustees. There is still some lack of clarity as to the identity of those members who are not trustees. Information on the curriculum for each subject and year group is in place on the website but it still lacks detail.

Leadership of SEN is still temporary and part time. Two additional members of staff have been identified (one in primary and the other in secondary) and are receiving specialist training to boost the school's capacity to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have now clearly identified which pupils are on the SEN register. Individual support plans for pupils are underdeveloped and do not consistently indicate success criteria by which the impact of the provision can be measured.

Leadership arrangements are now in place for English as an additional language. Teachers have received effective training on this aspect. Pupils have now been assessed against the Department for Education's five-point fluency scale. Teachers are using information about these pupils in their lesson planning.

The school meets its safeguarding duties. Governors are assiduous in checking that all requirements are met. Pupils reported that they feel safe. This was confirmed by those parents who responded to the school survey. A few younger pupils spoken to had concerns about the temporary classrooms in the playground. Some also worried about travelling on the bus to and from school, although the school ensures that chaperones travel with the children at all times.

Leaders and teachers carried out baseline assessments in each year group at the beginning of the academic year. This has provided teachers with more reliable information on pupils' starting points, especially those pupils who are new to the school in Year 7. Current assessment information in primary is very detailed. The attainment and progress of pupils in each year group and by pupil group, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, is tracked half-termly. The secondary assessment system is still developing as the school seeks to put in place a system for transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

The wider curriculum is developing in both primary and secondary. Pupils in Year 9 have started their GCSE options a year early. These options are closely aligned to English Baccalaureate EBacc subjects (which include English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages). There is some flexibility in the courses available. For example, pupils can study two languages or two humanities subjects. However, there is no vocational curriculum at present, nor alternative routes for those pupils for whom some EBacc subjects may not be appropriate. There are limited opportunities in secondary for music, drama and technology (such as engineering or resistant materials). Pupils have very recently started to receive music lessons from an outside provider. The library has been relocated and revamped to ensure it is more suitable for older pupils.

In primary, sports coaches are working well with class teachers to teach pupils the links between physical education (PE) and healthy living. The PE and sports premium is used well and leaders track its impact effectively.

The school does not yet have heads of departments in secondary or subject coordinators for all foundation subjects in primary. However, they have appointed a number of new specialist teachers who are taking the lead in the subjects they teach.

Leaders have now carried out an evaluation of the pupil premium funding, which until recently had not been targeted specifically enough at disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are now clearly identified and their progress tracked closely.

The very large majority of parents who responded to the recent survey conducted by the school said they would recommend the school to another parent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The recent appointments of specialist teachers in the secondary phase are improving the quality of teaching.

There remains some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils get off to a good start in early years, where the indoors environment has been transformed. Outdoors activities are less well developed, however.

Teachers and additional adults have established good relationships with pupils. In most instances expectations are clear and the behaviour code, when required, is used well. Additional adults work effectively with pupil groups and individuals once pupils are working on their tasks. At other times, during plenaries or when all the pupils are on the carpet together, there is little for them to do.

The quality of work in pupils' books is variable. There are good examples of where this is done well. However, at a times work is not well presented and written feedback is not consistent with the school's policy. There are occasions when

teachers pass on their own grammatical errors to pupils.

Details on different pupil groups is now available to all teachers, although the extent to which this information informs planning is still variable. There are still times when teaching is pitched at the middle so that some pupils find the work too easy and others too hard. In the best teaching, most-able pupils are set to work quickly while lower-attaining pupils receive additional reinforcement and explanation before settling down to their tasks.

Pupils are gaining opportunities to develop their mastery in mathematics. They are given tasks linked to real-life situations. Teachers set suitable model questions and demonstrate how to answer them effectively. However, few pupils, and in particular few disadvantaged pupils, are working in greater depth. Some pupils find it hard to apply the mathematical skills they have acquired to problem-solving. Pupils who are not fully fluent in English have difficulty explaining their method. Sometimes teachers' questions are too closed.

Pupils engage well in discussions about their work with other groups of pupils, for example in mathematics in primary and in history in secondary.

Phonics is taught well in Reception and key stage 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils enjoy their learning. They are willing and compliant in lessons and engage enthusiastically with group work and class discussion. They like their lessons and the after-school enrichment activities, such as the wide range of sports clubs and the drama club. Both primary and secondary pupils spoken to said they find the school day too long.

Pupils welcome those pupils who have joined the school as a result of exclusion or managed moves from other schools. Pupils whose families do not practise the Sikh faith said they are fully accepted and equally valued by staff and other pupils. The school's core 'Seva' (selfless service) values are at the heart of the life of the school.

Pupils said that behaviour was good except for the behaviour of a very small number of individuals whose specific needs have been identified by the school. Pupils understand the behaviour code well, although they say that at times it is too strict. Older pupils expressed a wish that they could be trusted to take on more responsibilities. During lunchtimes, some older pupils from secondary help younger ones with their reading and others take part in a games club but otherwise there is little for them to do at this time.

Outcomes for pupils

The school opened in September 2014 and has not yet experienced any external assessments at GCSE or at the end of key stage 2. In the most recent assessments at key stage 1, the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. However, the proportion working in greater depth or at a higher standard in each of these subjects was low. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 was high. The proportion of pupils at a good level of development by the end of Reception improved significantly on the slightly below-average outcomes in 2016.

The school's assessment system indicates that up to the October half term in 2017, just over half of pupils currently in Years 2 to 6 have made good progress or better in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points at the beginning of the academic year. There was no progress information available for Year 1 pupils. However, the proportion working at greater depth, especially for disadvantaged pupils, is very low. Outcomes are less clear for pupils in Years 7 to 9 because school leaders are still developing the assessment system.

Work in pupils' books indicates some variability in the progress pupils have made over time. Pupils are making good progress in Reception from their broadly typical starting points because of the effective provision in early years. Progress in key stages 1 and 2 has been affected by previously identified weak teaching. Some inconsistencies in teaching remain, which hamper pupils' progress.

School information indicates that pupils eligible for the pupil premium are now making more rapid progress than other pupils in school but have some way to go to diminish the difference with other pupils nationally. An accurate SEN register has only recently been established. As a result, there is no clear picture yet on how well these pupils are progressing. The school does not have a specific focus on most-able pupils.

External support

The school is now engaging well with local schools and partnerships. This has led to joint working on assessment at secondary and arrangements for moderation of pupils' work in primary. This is ensuring assessment information in the school is more accurate. The school is now represented at local headteacher conferences and belongs to local fair access protocols on managed moves for pupils. In some subjects good external network links have been established.