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Mrs Alexandra Beardmore
Head of School
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Dear Mrs Beardmore

Special measures monitoring inspection of Landau Forte Academy Moorhead

Following my visit with Fiona Rigby, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 21–22 November 2018, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 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 not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that school improvement plans are detailed and precise so that it is clear what actions are to be taken to improve teaching, and ensuring that the action plan is evaluated regularly in terms of the extent to which actions have had a positive impact on pupils
 - securing an accurate self-evaluation, so that school leaders and the governing body agree about the school's strengths and areas for improvement
 - giving accurate feedback to teachers about the quality of their practice, so that they know how to improve, and provide them with the support and training to do so
 - ensuring that teachers with responsibilities for subjects make a major contribution to checking and evaluating the quality of teaching
 - monitoring the impact of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they make good progress
 - developing the content of the whole-school curriculum, in order to ensure that it is delivered with clear learning intentions, outcomes and assessment opportunities
 - improving governance, so that governors challenge senior leaders more closely about the progress that is made by different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that governors monitor the use and impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the use made of the primary sport funding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rapidly to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - using information about pupils' prior learning to plan accurately the knowledge, skills and understanding required to deepen pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics
 - using information about pupils effectively to support the achievement of groups of pupils such as those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they make faster progress
 - providing work to pupils that provides sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able pupils
 - checking on pupils' learning more closely to identify misconceptions and to address them quickly
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics, so that they have a better understanding of how to deal with pupils' misconceptions and help them to develop their skills in problem solving and ability to reason

- applying the whole-school marking and feedback policy consistently, so that pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work
- ensuring that pupils’ reading books are appropriate for their ability.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that the behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school in order to eradicate low-level disruption in lessons
 - dealing with persistent absence of pupils and ensuring that there are effective systems in place to secure improved attendance, particularly of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by:
 - ensuring that all adults have secure subject knowledge in mathematics, so that children learn key vocabulary and concepts accurately
 - ensuring that leaders’ evaluation of the quality of early years’ provision is accurate through the use of effective monitoring practices.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school’s use of the pupil premium and sport funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 21 November 2018 to 22 November 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of school, the leaders of English and mathematics, the coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the early years leader, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. We also met with the chief executive officer of the Landau Forte Charitable Trust, all members of the interim executive board and the interim director of education of the trust. We also met with a national leader of education who is supporting the school one day a week. We looked at pupils' books from every year group, visited every classroom with leaders and heard pupils read. We reviewed the most recent information about pupils' progress and attainment. We reviewed the school's plans for improvement and its self-evaluation. We also reviewed information related to behaviour, attendance, exclusions and safeguarding.

Context

Following the last monitoring visit in March 2018, there have been considerable changes to members of the teaching staff. The head of school was absent from late June 2018 and is no longer employed by the school. A new substantive head of school was appointed and started in August 2018. One other part-time teacher left the school in the summer for a position at another school. The deputy headteacher is currently on sick leave. The early years and key stage 1 leader resigned her leadership position in September 2018 and is on sick leave. One other teacher is currently absent from school on sick leave. Two part-time members of staff have resigned this term.

The coordinator for pupils with SEND left in March 2018 for a position at another school. A new SEND coordinator was appointed.

Two teachers resigned their teaching and learning responsibility allowances in July 2018 and September 2018, respectively. Three interim teaching and learning responsibility allowances have been established in October 2018 to lead:

- the early years and phonics;
- key stage 1 and English, and
- key stage 2 and mathematics.

The school currently has two long-term supply teachers in the early years and key stage 1, and has recently appointed two teachers on temporary contracts, one in key stage 1 and one in key stage 2.

In June 2018, the governing body was disbanded by the trust. An interim executive board was started in June 2018 to monitor the work of the school. In July 2018, the primary director of the trust resigned her position. An interim director of education for the trust was appointed in September 2018. A new chief executive officer for Landau Forte Trust started in October 2018.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have not improved the quality of teaching quickly enough. Pupils do not make good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks shows marked weaknesses in their ability to write grammatically correct sentences and demonstrate a good understanding of mathematics. The outcomes for Year 6 pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 were very poor. The progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was well below the national average. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils made weak progress. There has been a decline in pupils' attainment in reading, mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation by the end of Year 6 since the school was placed into special measures in June 2016.

Following the previous monitoring visit in March 2018, when leaders were judged not to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures, the trust has made several changes to the leadership of the school. A new head of school has started this term and has put plans in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning. New middle leaders have been appointed to lead the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, it is far too soon to judge the impact of their work because many of the new initiatives that they are leading to raise standards have only just started. These changes to the curriculum have not yet made a marked difference to the amount of progress that pupils make.

The head of school and trust leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have put in place a comprehensive school improvement plan to improve pupils' progress. New initiatives to improve pupils' mathematics, phonics and writing skills have been introduced recently. Staff have received extensive training to improve their teaching, and further training has been booked. However, there have been many changes of staff since the start of term, and not all the current staff have received the same amount of training. There is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching to enable pupils to make good progress.

The leaders of English and mathematics have been supported well by trust leaders. They have scrutinised pupils' work to identify the gaps in pupils' learning. They have also visited schools to see good or better practice to raise their own expectations of how well pupils can achieve. The subject leaders are supporting the curriculum planning of colleagues, but it is too soon to judge the impact of their work.

Teachers are very appreciative of the extra training and support that they have received this term from the new head of school, trust leaders and from a national

leader of education. Teachers receive good-quality feedback about the quality of their work. Staff morale is good, and they are positive about the future direction of the school.

The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is weak. No one checked the quality of provision or the progress of these pupils in the summer term. This group of pupils underachieve. Progress of pupils with SEND is not good enough. This term, the head of school and teachers have reviewed the register of pupils with SEND to check that pupils' needs have been identified accurately. Leaders have not evaluated the quality of individual educational plans to check that they contain appropriate learning strategies to help pupils make better progress. The plans are poor. They do not include specific strategies to help pupils overcome their identified learning difficulties.

Leaders have written a detailed pupil premium plan to show how the school is allocating funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have prioritised the funding to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Many of the new initiatives to improve teaching have only just started. The pupil premium funding for 2017–18 was not effectively used. Disadvantaged pupils made poor progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics, compared to other pupils nationally.

The school leaders have reviewed the effectiveness of the physical education (PE) and sports funding. Last year, only 31% of Year 6 pupils could swim 25 metres. Leaders have prioritised funding from this year's allocation to increase the proportion of pupils who can swim this distance unaided.

School leaders have introduced a new curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics. It is too soon to judge the impact of this curriculum.

The trust disbanded the local governing body because it did not believe that the governors were checking the school's progress effectively. The new interim executive board is led by an experienced national leader of education. The board has gained a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members ask pertinent questions to school leaders about the implementation of the school improvement plan. They have instigated their own review of pupil premium funding and are closely monitoring how effectively it is used. It is too soon to judge the impact of their work to raise standards.

A national leader of education has supported the new early years leader well. She has quality assured the school's baseline assessments for the children and advised adults of what to teach. The teaching in the early years is beginning to improve but it is too early to judge whether there is a sustained impact on the amount of progress that children are making.

Parents and carers of children in the early years are very positive about the quality

of teaching. They informed inspectors that their children have settled well into school routines and have been keen to read and write at home. Parents of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 expressed concern about the amount of changes in staffing. However, some parents have noted how their children are now discussing with them what they have learned at school. Parents said this did not happen last year. Pupils' attendance has increased this term.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders accurately judge that only a small proportion of teaching is consistently good over time. Too much teaching is uninspiring. Teachers' expectations are too low, and pupils are not challenged well enough to achieve highly. When the quality of teaching is weak, low-level disruption increases, and pupils' learning is adversely affected.

Teachers do not consistently explain the purpose of lessons to the pupils. Too often, pupils complete tasks without understanding fully what they are learning. Pupils in key stage 2 were asked to improve their sentences in English grammar lessons. However, they were not encouraged to read their new sentences to understand whether they have successfully improved their work. Pupils do not have a deep understanding of how to form good sentences. Too many cannot consistently punctuate their writing to the standard expected for their age. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.

Teachers have encouraged pupils to use more imaginative language in their fictional writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have been writing diary entries from the perspective of a soldier in the Second World War. One pupil wrote, 'My heart dropped into my stomach.' Pupils' writing is becoming more descriptive and interesting to read.

Teachers have received training to improve their teaching of mathematics. Teachers have started to provide pupils with more opportunities to problem-solve and reason in mathematics. This is beginning to challenge the most able pupils. There are occasions when teachers ask pupils to be very precise in their mathematical explanations to deepen their understanding. This challenges the pupils well. However, teachers are not identifying pupils' mathematical misconceptions quickly enough. Teachers' subject knowledge is not secure. More training has been planned. Pupils' low attainment in assessments at the end of mathematical topics taught this term demonstrates that they do not have a deep understanding of the concepts taught.

All staff have very recently attended training on phonics. Teachers have assessed pupils' phonic skills and have planned appropriate activities to meet pupils' needs. Teachers are checking pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make. However, in too many sessions, pupils start to lose interest and low-level disruption begins. This hinders pupils' learning.

Pupils' reading skills are not promoted well. Too many have reading books that are too easy. Pupils informed inspectors of more challenging books that they read at home. Furthermore, the most able pupils are not set difficult questions to answer in reading comprehensions. During these activities, these pupils become uninterested in their learning.

The quality of teaching in key stage 1 has started to improve. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to improve their writing and mathematical skills. Pupils' behaviour has also improved. However, there have been changes of staffing in two out of the three classes in key stage 1 since the start of term. This has made it more difficult for changes to the curriculum to be embedded and raise standards.

Adults working in the early years have established clear routines to promote children's learning. Children settle quickly when they arrive at school and complete the tasks enthusiastically. The adults promote children's language development well. They provide many opportunities for children to talk. Children's phonic skills are also promoted well. Children are beginning to count independently and accurately to complete calculations. However, there are some activities in the early years that are not well matched to their abilities. As a result, children lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There is too much low-level disruption in all key stages. Pupils distract other pupils when they become uninterested in their learning. Some continue to shout out answers in class when they have been asked not to. They report that they see pupils walk out of classrooms in the middle of lessons. Some pupils expressed their frustration to the inspectors about the poor behaviour of others in their class.

The number of fixed-term exclusions was high in the last academic year. There was a significant proportion of younger pupils excluded. Leaders have started to put in place provision to support pupils who have acute social and emotional needs and display challenging behaviour. They have sought advice from external professionals to help provide the most appropriate support. This approach is beginning to help some pupils to improve their behaviour. The number of pupils excluded for very poor behaviour has reduced sharply this term.

Pupils' attendance in the last academic year was lower than the previous national average. One-fifth of all pupils were persistently absent. This is more than double the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who were persistently absent was also above the national average for all pupils.

Pupils' current attendance has increased markedly. Leaders have tenaciously followed up the reasons for all absences and emphasised the importance of good attendance to the pupils. The proportion of pupils overall who are persistently absent has fallen.

Outcomes for pupils

The outcomes at the end of the early years and key stages 1 and 2 in 2018 were very low.

The proportion of children who gained a good level of development at the end of the early years was below national average. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 dropped significantly and was well below the national average.

The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018 at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. No pupils attained the highly in any subject.

Pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 was weak in reading and mathematics in 2018. Pupils' progress in writing was broadly average. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was less than half the national average. This represents a steady decline in the standards attained since 2016.

Disadvantaged pupils also made weak progress in all subjects by the end of key stage 2. The school's current assessment information shows a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils are underachieving, particularly in Year 2. Pupils with SEND have not made good progress from their starting points and their attainment is low.

Leaders have implemented an extensive programme to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching. There are some early signs in some pupils' work that they have improved the quality of their work. However, these improvements are very recent, within the last month, and are not consistent through the school.

External support

The trust has not taken effective action since the school was placed into special measures in June 2016. There is an acknowledgement by the trust leaders that the quality of leadership and teaching has not been good enough. Pupils have not achieved the standards of which they are capable for the past two years.

The new trust leaders have taken decisive action to improve the leadership of the school and the quality of teaching. The new headteacher has been supported well by the senior leaders within the trust. Leaders have raised expectations about the quality of teaching. The amount of inadequate teaching has reduced.

The new chief executive officer has ensured that there is appropriate challenge and support for school leaders to raise standards at the school. The chair of the interim executive board has increased her role at the school and now supports teachers in their planning. This has been welcomed by the staff. The interim director of

education and a national leader of education have also supported teachers to plan to meet the needs of their pupils, as well as monitoring the implementation of new initiatives. It is too early to judge the impact of the initiatives on pupils' progress.

Leaders have put in place a comprehensive training programme to improve the quality of teaching. All staff have had the opportunity to observe good practice at other schools. These visits have enabled trust leaders and school staff to discuss the good practice that they observed. Teachers have a better understanding of the standards that pupils should attain.

The teaching school has provided good-quality support for the family resource worker. The support has focused on improving pupils' attendance. Attendance is more closely tracked, and the school has worked effectively with other professionals to reduce persistent absence.