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Mrs A Bradley
Acting Headteacher
Oakfield School
Hospital Lane
Blaby
Leicester
LE8 4FE

Dear Mrs Bradley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oakfield School

Following my visit to your school on 6-7 November 2013, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2012. 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 monitoring 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 Leicestershire.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012

- Increase the rate of progress pupils make in improving their behaviour so that they learn effectively in all lessons and behave with respect and courtesy towards each other and adults by:
 - ensuring attendance to lessons dramatically improves by the end of the summer term 2012
 - ensuring all staff consistently follow school policies in managing behaviour
 - developing ways for pupils to reflect on their own behaviour and identify how they can improve it.

- Improve the quality of lessons so that all teaching is mostly good or better by:
 - focusing on what pupils should learn in lessons based on what they already know and their interests
 - ensuring teachers check pupils' progress throughout lessons and adapt their teaching if necessary
 - effectively tackling low literacy skills
 - ensuring managers take decisive action when teaching is inadequate
 - developing the role of the teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively.

- Ensure senior staff use achievement and behaviour data more effectively to direct the work for improvement by:
 - analysing data and using it to accurately inform evaluations
 - checking that achievement data is accurate
 - using the analysis of data to produce perceptive action plans that reflect realistic aspirational targets.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 6–7 November 2013

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Management Committee and two representatives from the local authority.

Context

The headteacher resigned from her post during the summer break and left with immediate effect. The deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher and another senior leader is now the acting deputy headteacher. Near the start of the autumn term, and with the support of the local authority and the management committee, these leaders decided to stop teaching Key Stage 3 pupils on site and to base their provision in different areas of the county, according to pupils' needs. There are currently only 11 Key Stage 3 pupils on roll. They are still taught by staff from the school. The 21 primary pupils remain on site, where they are organised into three classes. The local authority has completed a consultation about the future organisation of Oakfield School. The outcome of this consultation is due to be presented to council's overview and scrutiny meeting on Monday 11 November to make decisions on the next steps. The final decision is due to be made in December.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Primary-aged pupils continue to make steady progress with their learning skills and their reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in other areas of the curriculum. As reported at the previous monitoring inspection, the pupils' books and other work in all the primary classes show that they are completing a good volume of work in lessons, and that the majority are making progress over time. Academic progress tends to accelerate once pupils have spent a few weeks settling into their new school and learning the new expectations. Some pupils who have been at the school for more than a term are making rapid progress. The school's more detailed assessment data is helping them to determine why some pupils are not making the progress they should, and to take action to put this right. In the lessons observed during the monitoring inspection, primary pupils generally worked hard and tried their best to learn new skills and concepts, usually with at least some success.

Key Stage 3 pupils are settling well into their new learning environments and the new way of working. Around half have improved their attendance from the start of the term. The school's monitoring shows some improvements in the volume and quality of work completed and the pupils' attitudes to learning. It is too early in the new arrangements for there to be any demonstrable academic progress.

The quality of teaching

All lessons observed in the primary classes had some good elements. The clear routines that are evident in each class help the pupils to know what to expect and enable them to make a smooth transition from one activity to the next. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Teachers are positive and enthusiastic, and plan interesting activities for the pupils to do. There was a good pace in all the lessons observed and pupils worked at a good rate. Where behaviour threatens to interfere with learning it is managed well and quickly. Teaching assistants know the pupils' needs well and help them to make progress. The new senior leaders are aware that there is now a need to concentrate on the fine detail of each lesson in order to ensure that each pupil's individual learning needs are met, and that the weaker areas of their skills are systematically tackled, so that all pupils make accelerated progress.

The school has little evidence of the quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 under the new arrangements. However, sensible arrangements have been put in place for support to be given to teachers who are teaching outside their subject specialism. Importantly, subject specialists are marking pupils' work on a weekly basis in English, mathematics and science and are giving useful advice about the work for the coming week.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There have been no exclusions since early September, which represents a considerable improvement compared to last term. Incidents involving physical intervention have also decreased. The vast majority of primary pupils have over 90% attendance, and around half consistently attend for 100% of the time. Poor attendance continues to be a significant issue for some of the Key Stage 3 pupils.

Behaviour on the school site during the inspection was calm and all pupils spent the vast majority of time in their lessons. Staff who work with the primary pupils show a good level of skill in managing the pupils' behaviour and helping them to become more independent. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistent and calm in their approach to behaviour management. All staff place a firm emphasis on the importance of learning, even when behaviour is challenging. If a pupil misses part of the lesson because of the way they are behaving, they make this time up during 'reward time'.

Staff working with the Key Stage 3 pupils are building good working relationships with them, which is helping the pupils to develop more positive attitudes to school and to learning. Staff approached the process of risk assessing potential new bases thoroughly and sensibly rejected those that were not considered to be suitable.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have acted quickly and effectively to break the cycle of poor behaviour and learning that was evident among the Key Stage 3 pupils during the previous monitoring inspection. The off-site placements have been set up carefully and appropriate consideration has been given to safety and safeguarding. The staff that have been allocated to each pupil as keyworkers are taking their roles seriously and have already made alterations to pupils' programmes, in consultation with the acting headteacher, in order to maximise their learning. Clear systems have been implemented for quality assuring each pupil's placement and the progress they are making. A few pupils are not yet receiving full-time education, but their time is increasing on a weekly basis.

These new senior leaders have designed and implemented a new system of tracking and assessment for the primary pupils. They are setting challenging targets for pupils for English and mathematics. The tracking system is detailed, based on national expectations, and allows them to see quickly where pupils are making progress and where they need to take action. Their own monitoring and evidence from the inspection indicate that there are some discrepancies between the levels that teachers are assessing pupils as working at, and the work in the pupils' books. Some of the actions identified if pupils are not making progress are too general.

The management committee took seriously the findings of the previous monitoring inspection and the implications for their work. The committee has been extended by six new members, all of whom bring particular expertise. Importantly, the new committee members include a parent for the first time. Two new sub-committees have been formed, one of which is responsible for overseeing the curriculum and assessment, and the other for finance. The Chair has already developed a good working relationship with the acting headteacher and has been into the school on a regular basis, providing valuable support as well as challenge. The management committee has thought carefully about how they can be sure that the school's data about pupils' achievements is accurate and have begun to implement their ideas.

External support

Like the management committee, the local authority acted quickly following the previous monitoring inspection. When the headteacher left they were quick to put sensible interim arrangements in place and to support the promoted leaders. The school improvement partner has provided good support for developing different ways of presenting assessment data and has brokered additional support for quality assuring the off-site provision.