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10 July 2014

Miss Melanie Wight
Headteacher
Redby Primary Academy
Fulwell Road
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR6 9QP

Dear Miss Wight

Special measures monitoring inspection of Redby Primary Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 8 and 9 July 2014, 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013. 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 academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The governors' statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

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 as below.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, so that it is at least good in all classes by:
 - setting robust targets for teachers' performance that link directly to pupils' short-and long-term progress and achievement targets
 - monitoring these targets regularly so that any underachievement is spotted quickly and pupils are supported to catch up
 - identifying weaknesses in teaching through regular and rigorous monitoring, then providing sustained, appropriate, good quality training programmes for teachers and teaching assistants
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and their needs, both in lessons and over time, so that senior leaders have an accurate picture of the academy's performance
 - reducing the use of worksheets as the dominant way of recording pupils' learning and by developing pupils' recording skills
 - improving pupils' attitudes to learning by involving them more in lessons.

- Urgently raise standards in mathematics by:
 - providing sustained training to improve teachers' subject knowledge so they are able to assess pupils' learning accurately and pitch work at the correct level
 - rigorously assessing pupils' underachievement and devising a robust plan to rectify the existing gaps in pupils' learning
 - reducing the use of worksheets in mathematics lessons by teaching pupils how to record their work, so that they consolidate their understanding of new concepts and can revise methods by looking over their work.

- Improve provision in the Nursery class quickly so that children have more opportunity to learn through well-planned play by providing training and support for:
 - the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the teaching assistants, so that all nursery staff develop a better understanding of how young children learn
 - all nursery staff so that they are able to assess children's emerging learning needs accurately and plan provision which accelerates their learning.

- Urgently improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher gains a better knowledge of the academy's performance through direct, first-hand monitoring of its work
 - ensuring that the headteacher devises a coherent management structure which ensures clear lines of accountability and responsibility for the work of senior and middle leaders, and which covers all aspects of the academy's work

- providing a calendar of monitoring activities for the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher which focus on the academy's most significant weaknesses and by allocating designated time to carry out these duties
- providing training for middle leaders and allocating time for them to carry out their responsibilities
- providing training for the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to raise her expectations of what children can achieve and develop her leadership skills to drive improvements to teaching and learning
- improving the effectiveness of governors so that they know how to hold the academy to account more robustly
- undertaking an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 8 to 9 July 2014.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' workbooks and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the Wearmouth Learning Trust.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2014, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has left the academy and a new leader has been appointed for September 2014. The governing body has also been restructured with a number of governors stepping down. The academy is expecting to become part of the Wearmouth Learning Trust in autumn 2014.

Achievement of pupils at the school

- Since the previous inspection, pupils in Year 6 are making better progress. Provisional 2014 test results show a larger number of pupils attaining higher levels, particularly in mathematics.
- Children in the Nursery class are not making adequate progress. Expectations are too low and the children are not given enough opportunities to extend their skills and experiences because activities are too often directed by the adults. Leaders have only very recently addressed the weak leadership in this important area of the academy.
- Recent results of the Year 1 phonics screening check, which assesses pupils' ability to recognise letters and sounds, are an improvement on last year's results.
- Progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is improving. The academy, with extensive support from the Wearmouth Learning Trust, has developed more rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. These have helped to ensure that teachers are giving pupils more challenging work and more aspirational targets.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is beginning to improve. A clearer leadership structure for mathematics has been put in place and there are early signs that this is having an impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the academy.

- Although there is inconsistency, pupils' progress in and enjoyment of reading is improving. Pupils and parents report that they have noticed a greater emphasis on reading across the academy. They welcome this.
- Most pupils with special educational needs are making progress similar to their peers. However, not all of these pupils are receiving support that focuses sufficiently on their needs and helps them improve their skills and knowledge. Her Majesty's Inspector will expect to see improvements in this by the time of the next monitoring inspection.
- Pupils in receipt of free school meals are making progress similar to that of their peers. However, more needs to be done to ensure that this 'gap' closes for all pupils in receipt of free school meals.

The quality of teaching

- Although improving, the quality of teaching at the academy is still too variable and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are still not always high enough.
- Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have set more robust targets for teachers that are more carefully linked to pupils' progress and achievement targets. This, along with more effective training and regular monitoring by leaders, has led to an improvement in teaching.
- While improving, teaching does not always take sufficient account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. More must be done to ensure that teachers and other classroom staff are clear about the needs of these pupils and work is carefully set and monitored to make sure they always make good progress.
- Marking is improving and a shared approach to teachers' feedback is now in place. However, teachers' advice and comments are not always precise enough so that, too often, pupils are not clear about what they need to do next to improve their work.
- In too many of the mathematics books seen there is an overemphasis on number work at the expense of other vital aspects of mathematics. Too much of the work seen is marked as being correct suggesting that pupils are not always being given work that stretches them.
- In the English books seen there are not enough examples of pupils being given opportunities to write at length. Even for the older pupils, too much of the written work is less than a page long.
- The work of teaching assistants needs to be more focused. Too often in lessons it is not clear how they help pupils make progress. Teachers should deploy teaching assistants with more care and be more precise about what they expect them to achieve with pupils. Teaching assistants should be more involved in the planning of lessons and recording the impact of their work so that their influence can be carefully tracked.
- The roles of subject leaders, although developing, are not precise enough. More needs to be done to develop their roles so that they are able to contribute more effectively to the development of teachers' subject knowledge and to the monitoring of work in classrooms and in pupils' books.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

- Pupils are extremely polite, helpful and confident. They are able to speak fluently about the academy and their work. They move around the academy with care, aware of the needs of others.
- Pupils report that they have noticed an improvement in the quality of the service the academy offers. They particularly welcome the greater opportunities they have to read both in school and at home.
- Pupils are more involved in their learning. They like the opportunities they are given through the marking of their work to reflect on their progress.
- Pupils are very well behaved. During the visit inspectors saw no examples of low-level disruption. Pupils are quick to settle in class although they do not always move promptly to learning because they are not always clear what they have to do without instruction.
- Attendance is broadly similar to national averages although it is encouraging that the attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals has improved significantly compared to last year.
- Parents report that they are very pleased with the service the academy offers. Those parents with whom the inspectors spoke report that they have noticed a positive improvement in the 'academic' aspects of the academy, with a noticeable increase in the amount and frequency of homework.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

- Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the governing body has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose.
- The academy's planning is now more detailed and clearly sets out, with appropriate milestones, how the academy's progress will be tracked. Both leaders and governors are involved in monitoring the plan and evaluating its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Since the previous monitoring visit, the acting headteacher has acted promptly to drive improvements across the academy. Working with the Wearmouth Learning Trust, she has put in place the essential monitoring systems that are helping to ensure that the quality of teaching at the academy improves.
- A new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been appointed and there are encouraging plans for this new leader to work closely with other leaders in English and mathematics to ensure that there are shared approaches to teaching and learning across the academy. Her Majesty's Inspector will review the impact of this work at his next visit.
- The management structure is now more secure and senior leaders are increasingly more able to hold staff to account for the quality of their work. There is now more regular review of teachers' planning followed by careful examination of the impact of teaching through the observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work.
- The roles of middle leaders are developing and they are increasingly clear about the part they play in ensuring high quality teaching. However, more must be done more quickly to equip middle leaders for their roles by ensuring that they have the time and the skills to undertake the work. This is a matter of urgency.
- The acting headteacher, working with the Wearmouth Learning Trust, has helped ensure the accuracy of judgements about the quality of teaching and of pupils' work in the academy by enlisting the services of Durham Education Development Services

and Sunderland local authority. These partners have met with leaders and teachers in the school to scrutinise pupils' work-books and observe teaching.

- Since the previous monitoring inspection, the governing body's membership has changed, with the addition of members from the Wearmouth Learning Trust. Evidence suggests that the work of the governing body is now more focused on holding the academy leaders to account for the quality of their work.

External support

The academy has received significant and effective support from the Wearmouth Learning Trust. The Trust has provided challenge and training. It has also brokered support from external services, notably Durham's Education Development Service, to help the academy ensure its judgements are sound. The academy has also received effective support from Sunderland local authority. Among other aspects, the authority has also supported the academy in its work with the Early Years Foundation Stage.