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14 May 2015

Mrs Angela Furnival
Acting headteacher
Lyndhurst Primary and Nursery School
Heron Street
Oldham
Lancashire
OL8 4JD

Dear Mrs Furnival

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lyndhurst Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 May 2015, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and the school's acting deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher. I also met with two representatives of the local authority. I held a discussion with seven members of the governing body and a short discussion with the headteacher who is due to take up post in September. I met with 12 pupils to discuss the changes that have happened in the school since the previous inspection and I had a brief tour of the classes in Nursery and Reception and in Years 1 and 2. I scrutinised the school's plans for improvement.

Context

The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have continued in their temporary roles. A new headteacher was appointed who is due to take up his post in September 2015. A teacher resigned in the spring term to be replaced by an existing member of staff. There have been some internal changes to teaching staff because of the start to, or end of, maternity leaves. The vice-Chair of the Governing Body resigned at Easter.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose because it makes clear the actions it will take over the next year towards the removal of special measures. It also makes clear how it will consult parents and take their views into account. No time has been wasted and parent consultations and meetings have already taken place as well as parent surveys. The views have been collected and collated and are already being acted on. There are plans for future surveys of parents to measure the impact of the school's work.

The school's plans for improvement need to be rewritten. The actions to be taken are too concentrated in the spring and summer terms. This means staff are too overburdened and improvements cannot take place systematically. The plan should be changed so that the actions are evenly spread over the next two years and that all weaknesses identified in the previous report and in external reviews are tackled. The plan does include each of the three main improvement points; however, some important aspects are missing, for example, plans to improve the tracking of pupils' progress miss out some important groups of pupils: ethnic heritage, term of birth, and whether pupils speak English as an additional language. There is not enough mention of how writing across subjects will be developed, how presentation will be improved, or how teachers' subject knowledge will be increased. Despite the fact there has been a three-year decline in pupils' attainment this aspect is not mentioned with enough specificity.

In the improvement plan, the actions are not always relevant or specific enough and there are no precise measures to be able to assess whether the actions have been successful or not in improving pupils' achievement. The persons responsible for monitoring are sometimes the same as those who are leading the actions and those who are evaluating whether they are successful or not. This method is not objective enough.

Despite these weaknesses in planning, the whole staff should be commended for getting on with the job of improving the school quickly. There has been no time

wasted. External support from the local authority's behaviour specialists has been highly effective in tackling the significant weaknesses in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. There is now an effective behaviour policy with clear systems in place for all staff to follow. As a result, staff are much more consistent in their approach to any examples of poor behaviour. Pupils who spoke with me understood the system and said it had already started to improve their attitudes and respect for others. They were also very clear about the seven expectations of behaviour which now appear throughout the school. Staff now have specific responsibilities to manage behaviour in their own classes. They have much clearer roles and responsibilities. The leadership and management of behaviour have therefore improved significantly.

Governance is another area in which there has been significant improvement since the inspection. The external review of governance has led to the creation of an action plan which has already started to be tackled. Two new governors, one a national leader in governance and one a local leader, have modelled the types of questions that should be asked of school staff. As a result, the level of challenge, the level of support and the detail recorded in minutes have all improved. Governors have started to find information for themselves and have started to commission reports from sources other than the headteacher. Consequently, they are no longer reliant on a limited range of evidence to make their judgements and decisions. They have surveyed the views of pupils and staff and have started acting on the results. Governors have challenged the quality of the data they receive and have asked for it to be presented in a more comprehensive way. The reviews into the spending of external funding have taken place and the governing body has started to work on the initial recommendations.

Performance management and line management have been significant weaknesses. The acting headteacher has worked with the local authority specialists and with governors to make sure all staff have clear job descriptions and delineated roles and responsibilities. The lesson observation forms have been amended to have a greater focus on the Teachers' Standards. All staff now have appraisal targets, and all teachers have had a mid-year review. Judgements about teachers' performance take into account lesson observations, scrutiny of work, data about pupils' achievement and pupils' views. As a result, the performance management system now meets statutory requirements.

Training for staff has been effective in improving the management of pupils' behaviour. The assistant headteacher attended an important conference regarding disadvantaged pupils. As a result of this training, she has started tracking the provision for and outcomes of all disadvantaged pupils in the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection without a discussion with me.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Oldham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector