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Mr Simon Bush
Headteacher
The Green Way Academy
21st Avenue
Hull
HU6 8HD

Dear Mr Bush

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Green Way Academy

Following my visit with Susan Twaits, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 30 June and 1 July 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2014. 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.

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 the Director of Children's Services for Kingston upon Hull City.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Wiles
Associate inspector

Appointed as an Associate Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2014

- Urgently improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that it is at least good, by ensuring:
 - all staff consistently use the school's agreed methods for the teaching of reading
 - teachers' checks on pupils' progress and attainment are accurate, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that work can be pitched at the right level pupils with special educational needs receive the support that they need
 - that the most able pupils are provided with work that offers sufficient challenge
 - that pupils are given clear guidance in the feedback they receive about how to make progress in their work and learning and are challenged to do so
 - marking and feedback in subjects other than English and mathematics help pupils to improve their subject specific skills rather than just focusing on aspects such as grammar or presentation.

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in reading, writing and spelling and in the application of numeracy skills, by:
 - ensuring Key Stage 1 pupils make at least good progress in the learning of letters and the sounds that they make
 - urgently improving the teaching of reading across the school but particularly in Year 1 so that it builds on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - increasing the range of contexts pupils are given to apply their mathematical learning
 - ensuring pupils get effective feedback especially on how to improve their numeracy skills.

- Improve the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure by making sure record-keeping, particularly in relation to some pupils' welfare and circumstances, is always kept up to date.

- Urgently improve the impact of leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - reviewing the school's systems for gathering evidence of pupils' progress and making regular checks to make sure these are accurate
 - improving the procedures for holding staff to account for the quality of their teaching and pupils' progress by carrying out more regular and focused checks on the teaching and support pupils receive in lessons, and on the work in their books
 - setting ambitious goals for the outcomes pupils are expected to achieve.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 30 June and 1st July 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised a range of documents presented by leaders. They met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, peer headteacher, middle and senior leaders, and external consultants. They also held meetings with the Chair and members of the Governing Body and a representative from the sponsor.

Context

There have been no significant changes in context since the last monitoring inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The academy's assessment information, lesson observations and pupils' work show that pupils' achievement has improved since the previous monitoring inspection.

As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement is strengthening. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books, alongside the academy's own data, point to an increasing number of pupils catching up and making better progress than previously. A notable success is that the proportion of children achieving the expected level of development in the early years has risen from 37% in 2014 to 52% in 2015. The progress of Year 1 pupils is also accelerating: the number of pupils reaching the expected level in recognising the sounds that letters make (phonics) is now in line with the national average for 2014.

This better picture has come about because leaders have introduced several new strategies to improve pupils' achievement, which in turn are leading to improvements in classroom practice. However, these are not fully embedded across the academy. The academy has also strengthened the way it tracks pupils' achievement in letters and sounds and, as a result, staff have a greater understanding of the progress pupils should make. The regular reviews of how pupils are achieving are empowering staff to pinpoint pupils who are falling behind and set appropriate targets. The planning of lessons in some classes is more precise and teachers' skills in designing tasks for pupils of different abilities are growing. However, these improvements are uneven across the academy, so the progress of pupils is not rising uniformly in all year groups. There are still pockets of underachievement and, in some classes, most noticeably in lower Key Stage 2, some pupils are behind where they should be due both to some weak provision in previous years and currently.

Teacher assessments in Key Stage 2 indicate that attainment remains below the national averages of reading and mathematics, whereas in writing it is closer to national expectations.

Despite a range of additional interventions, the achievement of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding (additional government money) remains below that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching

Teachers are using the information from their assessments of pupils' work to prepare for lessons to a greater extent than was apparent at the previous monitoring inspection. They are responding better to the particular learning needs of different groups than was the case previously. However, this practice is in its infancy and variable across the academy. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, are not being provided with work that is consistently sufficiently challenging. Therefore, pupils do not routinely make as much progress in some lessons concerned as they might.

The quality of some teachers' marking has improved notably since the previous monitoring inspection. A new system for marking pupils' work has been introduced since the previous monitoring visit. Where it is being implemented effectively, it is providing pupils with helpful guidance, more opportunities to improve on what they have done and further challenge to their understanding. However, there are occasions when opportunities to reflect and challenge learning following a piece of work are missed.

The information and guidance provided to pupils during the course of lessons is not sufficient to ensure that all make as much progress as they might. Where teachers are checking on pupils' understanding of the learning more frequently, progress is being made. However, too often pupils are working on tasks that are not challenging them effectively. Some teachers are creating opportunities during lessons when they can question the pupils, or point things out to them, but they do not use those opportunities to maximum effect often enough. They do not use the opportunities well enough to ensure that what has been learnt is reinforced clearly, to direct the pupils precisely to things that they need to do differently, or use the pupils' responses to extend the learning. Where practice is more effective, the teachers and teaching assistants gave feedback and guidance to pupils during one-to-one or small-group discussions, such as in phonics sessions and in a Year 1 writing session. On these occasions, the staff questioned the pupils purposefully and prompted them to think more carefully or in greater depth. This attention to detail within teaching is not consistent across the academy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance has declined from the previous year and is currently below the academy's target and national expectations. The academy has a number of systems, rewards and sanctions in place and the actions that are planned for September are based on an evaluation of the attendance patterns from this year.

Pupils are generally polite and behave appropriately around the academy and in class. They usually try hard and persevere even when activities are less engaging. However, where teaching fails to motivate them sufficiently and where tasks lack demand, stimulus and activity, some pupils understandably become restless and their interest wanes. In an upper Key Stage 2 class an instant reward system was used which aligned with the academy policy and helped to promote pace and positive attitudes in class. Despite there being some low-level disruption in some classes, this has not been implemented across the academy.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders are becoming increasingly confident in their knowledge of the academy's strengths and areas for development. Support has been streamlined, as have many of the strategies employed, and this is having a positive impact on the pace of change. Nonetheless, senior leaders are well aware of where improvements to teaching are still needed.

Routine use of assessment directly to inform teaching remains a significant issue, despite the green shoots seen in some classes. The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils, although improving with revised systems, is still too variable. In some classes pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work and reach the next level. In other year groups, guidance from teachers is sometimes limited to what pupils have achieved and does not always give pupils the sharply focused comments they need to improve their work further.

Leadership of phonics and within Key Stage 1 is stronger and more focused, as a result of mentoring and coaching internally from senior leaders and from consultants. New, higher expectations are being met more regularly. The impact of strategies used to raise the achievement of those pupils supported through pupil premium funding is not evaluated sufficiently to ensure that funding is appropriately allocated at all times. This group of pupils continues to underachieve in comparison with their peers.

Governors are aware of recent improvements because they are receiving more purposeful data from senior leaders which is supporting them in the challenge they provide. They have accessed training around finance from the sponsor and find regular newsletters are informative. Governors play a key role in engaging with parents and are keen to continue to ensure that parents' views play a significant part in the academy's development.

While they are encouraged by recent improvements, all parties are in no doubt that much further work is required to realise the potential of all pupils and improve the quality of their learning consistently across the academy.

External support

The academy sponsor has closely monitored the support being brokered. This has resulted in some streamlining and increased focus which has been of benefit to the academy. The impact of those working in the academy has increased. The support of a peer headteacher has helped to focus and direct improvements. New strategies are well thought through and the developing systematic approach is improving the pace of change.