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Mrs Diane Humphrey
Headteacher
Waverley Primary School
Douglas Road
Balby
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 0UB

Dear Mrs Humphrey

Special measures monitoring inspection of Waverley Primary School

Following my visit (with Brian Stillings, Ofsted Inspector) to your school on 2 and 3 February 2016, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015. 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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lithgow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2015

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards and enable pupils to progress well, especially in Key Stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - teaching focuses on ensuring pupils have secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics which they practise regularly in all their lessons
 - the work provided for all abilities of pupils challenges them well and enables them to achieve their potential.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety so they are both at least good, by making sure that:
 - all staff have equally high expectations of pupils' behaviour around the school and of their attitudes in lessons
 - the school has a clear behaviour policy that all staff apply consistently well
 - pupils understand the need to attend well and be punctual if they are to make good progress and are themselves involved in recording their individual attendance data.
- Quickly strengthen the overall impact of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
 - leaders have a fully accurate picture of all aspects of the school's work, through their thorough checking of all aspects of its performance
 - leaders have very clearly defined roles and accountability for monitoring their areas of responsibility and addressing their findings, including improving the quality of pupils' work and learning over time
 - leaders are given the training they need to become effective in their roles.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 February 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, senior leaders, groups of pupils, two representatives of the interim executive board (IEB), a representative from Wakefield City Academy Trust (WCAT) and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, two further teachers have left the school, taking the total since the original inspection to eight. In addition to that, three more teachers are leaving the school this term. The executive headteacher is no longer supporting the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Despite a positive start to this academic year, pupils are not making the progress they should be now because of the significant staffing turbulence which has affected the whole school. At the previous monitoring inspection, pupils were starting to make better progress than they had previously. However, due to changes in teaching personnel, pupils are now not challenged enough in lessons, and they cannot solve problems effectively because they have limited opportunities to develop their skills in this area. This has resulted in standards remaining very low. In some teaching, a small number of pupils are making effective gains in their learning, particularly when they are supported by a teaching assistant. However, this is not the case for the overwhelming majority of pupils in most classes. The school's most recent performance information confirms that pupils are not making the rapid progress they need to 'catch up' the lost learning resulting from a legacy of inadequate teaching and learning over time.

The quality of work seen in many pupils' books has declined more recently, and reflects the significance of the staffing difficulties. The majority of pupils are capable of attaining a much higher standard than they currently do now and should be making faster progress. Leaders have introduced a series of strategies to tackle weaker teaching and improve the amount of progress being made by pupils. However, the lack of impact and whole-hearted adherence to these directives indicates that some teachers have lacked the necessary commitment, drive and ambition to fully implement these actions.

Children in the early years are not making enough progress. This is because some of the activities provided fail to challenge them enough or do not provide them with enough opportunities to practise and apply their learning. Consequently, standards have declined in this area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment has declined since the previous monitoring inspection. The situation has been exacerbated by several staff changes recently. There are only two classes where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is impacting positively on the amount of progress being made by pupils. This is not acceptable and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Weak teaching across the school is characterised by low expectations from teachers, a lack of challenge, questioning which is not allowing pupils to think deeply enough and a lack of pace in lessons. Very frequently, teachers' planning does not take into account what pupils already know or what the next steps in their learning are. It focuses too much on the content of the curriculum, not on what pupils need to do to move their learning on. Staff do not talk to pupils enough about what they are learning, and miss opportunities to encourage and support pupils to think, justify and explain their reasoning.

When the school was placed in special measures a year ago, school leaders introduced new initiatives to make improvements, which were starting to impact on progress in mathematics and writing in particular. However, the steps forward taken in these subjects have now started to ebb at a fast pace. The 'cold and hot writes' initiative in writing, which showed pupils were starting to make precision improvements in their own writing, are now not being carried out with the same effect or effort. Furthermore, the lack of challenge for all pupils, coupled more recently with very low expectations by teachers of what pupils can achieve in both mathematics and writing, is significantly hindering pupils' learning, skills and development.

Fluency in mathematics has been a high priority since the previous monitoring inspection, and pupils are now using rapid recall of mathematical facts including multiplication tables to much better effect. They are applying these recently acquired skills when carrying out formal calculations. Recent efforts to improve the quality of reading have included staff training on the teaching of phonics and observing good practice in guided reading. However, the impact of this cannot be measured as not all teachers are taking the guidance and advice on board quickly enough and utilising what they have learned in their own teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Around the school, pupils continue to show that they are well mannered and respectful. The continued tracking and monitoring of behaviour incidents show that the amount of unacceptable behaviour has continued to drop. Discussions with pupils reiterated that behaviour is now much better on the playground. Attendance figures this term, compared with the same time last year, show that the number of pupils missing school has declined, and those pupils who are persistently absent has dropped by almost 50%.

However, due to weaknesses in teaching across the school, in too many classes, pupils' attitudes to learning have deteriorated. This is because the work they are given does not capture their interests or challenge them, and they become unmotivated and switched off. Furthermore, some teachers do not recognise or acknowledge low-level disruption in lessons and the impact this is having on other pupils in the class.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Systems and procedures to ensure that leaders are monitoring key areas of the school's work more sharply and robustly have improved. Leaders support and challenge teachers in a quest to improve outcomes for pupils vehemently. This has led to leaders holding teachers to account more acutely and poor teaching not being accepted. Inevitably, this has meant that some teachers, who did not have the commitment and enthusiasm to want to improve, have now left or plan to leave the school imminently. While this highlights the leaders' determination to have the very best quality of teaching and learning taking place, they are now left with a temporary staffing structure and the additional challenges this presents to them. A long-term, strategic solution to these staffing difficulties must be found as a matter of great urgency to stem the recent decline in standards.

The IEB has not acted swiftly enough to ensure that improvements are made sufficiently quickly. Delays to convening meetings, and the poor administration of them, coupled with a lack of focus about what its role is, has meant that the leadership for the strategic vision and direction of the school on its improvement journey has been hindered. Alongside this, cancellations of planned meetings for the project steering group with the local authority and the proposed academy sponsor have meant that overarching solutions to the staffing issues have not been discussed at the right level or in a timely way. Too many action plans have been produced since the school was originally placed into special measures, which has led to the focus on improvement becoming blurred and diluted. The IEB needs to ensure that leaders can refocus their priorities back to what is going to make the difference in driving improvements throughout the school.

Overall, current leadership in school is stretched too thinly. Leaders have left or relinquished their roles, middle leaders have received high-quality training and coaching and then have left, and this has destabilised subject and curriculum team leadership. This has left the three core leaders – you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher climbing a very steep mountain again.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide support for leaders in the school, both financially and through additional personnel. Senior officers from the local authority have worked with the IEB to ensure that meetings become more focused and streamlined in the future, and have recently re-introduced the standards committee to refocus priorities and to shape the future direction of support and challenge. In

addition to this, senior officers have held meetings to support the transition of the school becoming part of an academy trust.

Leaders in school have benefited very recently from attending leadership courses and network meetings from the proposed academy trust sponsor, along with teaching assistants receiving well-timed training in phonics. Leaders have also continued to benefit from joint moderation meetings within their cluster for writing and early years.

A local leader of education has been utilised to provide leadership support; however, it is too early to judge the impact of this.