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Mrs Wendy Gordon
Principal
Green Oaks Primary Academy
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Northamptonshire
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Dear Mrs Gordon

Special measures monitoring inspection of Green Oaks Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 10 to 11 October 2017, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 2016.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint one newly qualified teacher.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the trust board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2016.

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards of attainment, particularly for boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills in reasoning and solving problems in mathematics
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to build upon and apply their skills in phonics to support their development in reading and writing
 - pupils have access to stimulating resources to help them develop a love of books and reading
 - all teachers understand and use information about pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that work is at the right level
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can achieve and provide them with a stimulating learning environment in which to learn and work that is suitably challenging
 - lower-ability pupils are set tasks that they can attempt for themselves and that deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - ensuring that their attendance improves including that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - making sure that more boys reach a good level of development by the end of the early years.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management and the capacity of leaders to improve pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that the school's system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress is clear, understood by all, and used to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - making sure that leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that senior and middle leaders are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and providing training and support to teachers so that they develop the skills and knowledge to become effective
 - defining and implementing a strategic approach to the promotion of fundamental British values and the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils.

An external review of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to

assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 October 2017 to 11 October 2017

Evidence

The inspector met with the principal, deputy principal, senior leaders, teachers, and a representative from the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. He spoke with parents before school, and with pupils formally and informally in classes, and at break and lunchtimes. The inspector visited all classes and examined a wide variety of pupils' workbooks. He scrutinised a range of documents. These included those relating to pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance, staff performance and safeguarding.

Context

Since the last inspection, the principal and four teachers have left the school. The trust has appointed leaders in English and mathematics, a coordinator for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and a teacher in the early years. The new principal was appointed in January 2017. The designated special provision unit is no longer part of Green Oaks. It is due to move into new premises in January 2018.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new principal is tackling effectively the vast majority of areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. She has successfully managed staff changes and improved the quality of teaching and leadership. She has ensured that relationships with staff and parents have remained positive during this significant period of change. The principal has also overseen an increase in the number of after-school clubs and the introduction of a half-termly parents' forum.

Leaders have produced a statement of action that contains clear actions that are linked to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The statement also contains appropriate timescales and monitoring opportunities. This ensures that staff are in no doubt as to what should be done, by when and by whom. The principal and the trust's senior education adviser ensure that actions have been completed, and that those actions have led to improvements, through weekly checks.

There is clear ambition and determination in all staff to improve the school's performance quickly and sustainably. Subject leadership has been strengthened by recent appointments and by effective support from the trust. The leader responsible for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well qualified and experienced. She has established a system, with teachers, for closely monitoring pupils and reporting this group of pupils' progress to parents.

Leaders have a clear sense of direction for improving the school. This has been communicated effectively to all staff. Parents have noted these recent

improvements, in particular the improved communication between school and home.

Teachers assess pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics more frequently. Pupils' progress meetings between the principal and class teachers ensure that pupils' achievements and next steps are discussed often. Consequently, any pupil falling behind is swiftly given the help they need. Teachers now have the opportunity to work alongside colleagues from other schools. As a result, they are able to moderate their pupils' work. This means the judgements made regarding pupils' attainment and progress are accurate and secure.

Teachers have a much clearer understanding of the expectations linked to their year group. They are, therefore, matching work much more closely to the needs of pupils. The next steps in pupils' learning are now planned with accuracy and care and this is resulting in more challenging activities, particularly for the most able.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding has been undertaken. This helped to identify areas of existing good practice alongside those that could be developed further. The principal has a clear view of the monitoring and allocation of this funding. A provision map shows her precisely the extra support that disadvantaged pupils are receiving. Class teachers are aware of disadvantaged pupils' starting points and their targets for the end of the year. This enables leaders to hold teachers fully to account for the progress of these pupils.

Senior leaders are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and providing support to teachers. For example, English and mathematics leaders undertake frequent scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and check teachers' planning. Strengths and development areas are fed back to teachers. As a result, teachers' classroom practice improves. Leaders ensure that all classrooms and corridors contain displays that support pupils' learning. Leaders have a strong understanding of pupils' assessment information. Leaders are, therefore, able to allocate further support to any groups of pupils who require extra help.

Pupils do not have a strong understanding of British values and of faiths different to their own. They are, therefore, not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be. Leaders are aware that this area for improvement from the last inspection report has not yet been addressed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Pupils have increased opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in their mathematics lessons. For example, pupils in Year 5 were challenged to reason, 'Is it true that any number that ends in 52 is divisible by 4?' A corridor display challenged pupils to calculate the heights of the giraffe and Pelly from a book by Roald Dahl. Classrooms now contain problem-solving areas. Leaders are aware that pupils of all abilities should develop skills in this area.

Pupils have sufficient opportunities to build upon and apply phonic skills in reading and writing. Staff have received appropriate phonics training and ensure that pupils are assessed frequently. Classrooms are awash with letters, sounds and words. In the early years, children practise letter formation in a variety of ways, in indoor and outdoor environments. There are opportunities to practise writing individual letters, words and sentences. For example in the Year 1 class, a role play area was set up as a doctor's surgery. This encouraged pupils to write such things as patients' symptoms and potential treatments.

There is a new library area and reading spaces are now in all classrooms. These are encouraging pupils to develop a love of books and reading. Rewards and competitions to motivate pupils to read more frequently are proving popular. Reading assemblies allow teachers to share their favourite books and authors. During the inspection, the English subject leader led a reading assembly on the Russian tale of Baba-Yaga. This involved pupils acting out the story. The leader skilfully asked the watching pupils to infer and predict what could happen next. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed this and participated maturely throughout.

Pupils said they enjoy reading, with most pupils reading regularly at home. In key stage 1, not all pupils had reading books at an appropriate level of challenge.

Teachers set lower-ability pupils tasks that help promote their independence. For example, in Year 1, pupils were working alone using apparatus to find number bonds to 10. They then successfully recorded their findings without direct adult supervision.

Staff in the early years have improved the quality of provision, especially for boys. The current theme of 'construction' matches the building works that are occurring next door to the school. There are opportunities, both inside and out, for children to write, count and be creative. Children's interest is sustained because these activities motivate and interest them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to monitor the attendance of all pupils. Communication between school and home has improved. Letters are sent congratulating pupils on good and improving attendance. There are also letters informing parents when attendance drops. The pastoral-support worker supports families by making home visits and agreeing attendance contracts. There are rewards for individual pupils and classes in which attendance is consistently good. This work has ensured that attendance levels have much improved from last year. However, leaders are aware that persistent absence remains too high.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They talk enthusiastically about the activities they have been given. Pupils respond quickly to instructions from adults, meaning lessons flow without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare. Behaviour outside at break and lunchtimes is positive. Classrooms, cloakrooms and

shared areas are kept tidy. Pupils told the inspector the school teaches them how to be safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Outcomes for pupils

In 2017, the proportion of children in the early years who achieved a good level of development remained below the national average. There was a similar picture for the Year 1 phonics check. At key stage 1, there were increases in the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportions were below the national averages. At key stage 2, pupils made better progress than in 2016, however, the levels of attainment in all subjects were below national averages.

The school's own attainment information from July 2017 showed large proportions of pupils were working below age-related expectations. However, current work in books suggests that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are now making faster progress in writing and mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching and accuracy of assessment is improving rapidly throughout the school.

External support

The trust has provided effective support. The education adviser has made frequent visits to validate the principal's judgements on, for example, the quality of teaching. The trust has brokered expertise from other schools. This effective support has aided staff in the early years to create stimulating and creative learning environments. The trust's assessment adviser has helped teachers improve their knowledge of the progress and attainment expected of each year group. The adviser also ensured that judgements teachers make on pupils' progress are accurate. The trust has developed a new school website. This contains all statutory information. Parents have welcomed this as a ready source of information.