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28 December 2017

Mrs Andrea Liversidge
Principal
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Dear Mrs Liversidge

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brookfield Primary Academy

Following my visit with Gillian Nimer, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13 December 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2016. 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 taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels so that:
 - all safeguarding arrangements satisfy the requirements of the most recent legislation
 - effective and robust systems are in place to hold leaders and managers to account for the progress of all groups of pupils, but particularly for those who are disadvantaged
 - leaders know the impact of pupil premium funding and target extra resources where they are needed
 - policies and procedures are up to date, being consistently implemented and regularly reviewed
 - there are effective arrangements for governance in place, which challenge leaders to bring about rapid improvement
 - the curriculum is fit for purpose and provides pupils with a broad and balanced programme of work.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and accelerate outcomes for pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve in all areas of the curriculum
 - checking that assessment information is accurate and is used to plan appropriate challenge and support for different groups of pupils, particularly the most able
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge so that they know what to teach
 - securing a stable and permanent teaching staff who are well supported by middle leaders to bring about rapid improvements
 - developing the learning environment in the Nursery class to improve curriculum provision.
- Improve attendance and behaviour by ensuring that:
 - absence of all pupils is analysed, including for specific groups of pupils, and effective action is taken to make sure that pupils are in school and ready to learn
 - the behaviour policy is consistently implemented and has a positive impact on learning in the classroom
 - all staff know how to deal with challenging behaviour and keep all pupils safe when incidents arise.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 13 December 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, the chief executive, the executive principal and a school improvement leader from Aston Community Education Trust (ACET). They met with the director of learning for Rotherham local authority, middle leaders and the chair of governors. A telephone conversation was held with the acting chief executive of Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT). Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and observed parts of lessons. They spoke with pupils in a meeting, at lunchtime and around school. Not all areas for improvement from the inspection were considered today. The focus of this visit was to establish: the impact of the work of the multi-academy trust; the extent of improvements in teaching; and whether teaching is leading to better outcomes for pupils.

Context

Brookfield Academy is currently part of WCAT. The trust is in difficulty and has been unable to bring about improvements in the schools it has taken on. The regional schools commissioner approached ACET to provide school improvement services to Brookfield. ACET has conducted a 'due diligence' process to fully understand the needs of Brookfield Primary Academy and to assure itself that it has the capacity to provide the school with the support it needs to rapidly improve. The intention is that Brookfield will formally join ACET from April 2018. WCAT put in an acting headteacher to help stabilise Brookfield. She left the school in October 2017 and a new, substantive principal from ACET took over leadership of the school. Most other staff in school were present at the time of the last inspection. Some temporary teachers were employed. In May 2017, WCAT put in place an interim education committee, of whom several members were WCAT employees. This has recently been disbanded by ACET and a new chair of governors is in place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new principal has swiftly got to grips with what needs to change. She is a skilled communicator who has quickly won the trust of pupils and staff. School improvement personnel at the trust have verified her evaluation of teaching and learning and all have a shared understanding of where teachers require additional support to enable them to meet the needs of pupils. She has started to implement a vision for learning that is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils spoken to really like the principal, or as one pupil put it, 'because she is always smiling and she makes us guess things about her, like her favourite colour'.

Middle leaders, closely supervised and coached by leaders from ACET, are at the early stages of bringing about improvements. Leaders have evaluated assessment

processes and are not confident that existing information accurately shows what pupils know and can do. Consequently, although leaders are sure about the standards pupils are reaching, they do not have a very clear picture of the progress pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making.

The new chair of governors brings a deep understanding of the local community and comprehends the challenges facing the school. She is fully aware that the school has been failing its pupils over a long period. She has been vigilant in representing the school's interests with the local authority, WCAT and more recently with ACET. The chair of governors has managed to secure a representative governing body, but it has yet to have its first meeting. Agendas for this meeting, scheduled for next week, show leaders' intentions to share details of the weaknesses that need to be urgently addressed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Over time, some pupils in some classes have had poor teaching due to many changes in teachers and a series of supply staff. Apart from in one class, where there is ongoing long-term absence, the acting headteacher, and now the principal, have secured more stable staffing this school year. The principal has recruited an additional new teacher to start in January 2018.

ACET lead teachers for mathematics and English have been working alongside teachers in key stage 2 classes to help improve the daily diet for pupils. The principal reports that staff, even though they have had a turbulent few months, are willing to try new things and to put pupils' interests first.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching English, closely linking learning in reading and writing to a good-quality text used by the whole class. This is having a positive effect on learning in key stage 1. However, due to the frequent turnover of staff and lack of consistency in planning appropriately challenging sequences of learning, pupils in key stage 2 have made much less progress. Work in pupils' books illustrates a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress across key stage 2. The needs of low-prior-attaining pupils and the most able have not been met well so far. In some classes, teachers are not correcting pupils' misconceptions as they arise and feedback to pupils is not helping them to improve.

The leader for mathematics has been seconded from another WCAT school. He has supported staff to develop their subject knowledge and has observed some improvements in mathematics teaching. Leaders acknowledge that pupils still have considerable gaps in their understanding, often due to their teachers' lack of subject knowledge. However, because of support, teachers are now planning appropriate series of lessons that enable pupils to better understand new learning. Teachers are ensuring that pupils have the right equipment to support them in calculations, and consequently, pupils are now getting through more work in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have taken rapid action to improve pupils' behaviour throughout school. Pupils struggling to regulate their own behaviour have been supported by external agencies and some pupils have moved to specialist schools. As a result, school is calm and orderly and incidents of poor behaviour are much reduced. Pupils understand the consequences of misbehaving and say that teachers deal with them fairly: all who spoke to the inspectors felt that behaviour around school was much improved. Pupils know whom to go to if they have a problem and relationships between pupils and staff are genial.

The education welfare officer, employed by ACET, is beginning to have an effect on pupils' attendance. The attendance team is regularly present at the school, reminding pupils and parents of the importance of punctuality and daily attendance in school. There has been a small improvement in attendance when compared with a similar period in 2016, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is falling. Despite this, attendance overall remains below national figures and persistent absence is still twice the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

In 2016, only 16% of pupils at the end of Year 6 attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, leaving them very poorly prepared for secondary education. In 2017, this rose to 25% but only one fifth of disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard. Pupils have made weak progress over time, with the weakest progress taking place in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils have made considerably less progress than other pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in the bottom 10% for the third year in a row, when compared with other schools nationally. Recent class-based assessments show that too many pupils in key stage 2 are still working at standards below those expected for their age.

In contrast, outcomes for children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 have continued to improve. At the end of Year 2, pupils were attaining results in line with national averages in reading and writing and slightly above in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics check is also close to the national average.

External support

Since the first monitoring inspection, support from WCAT has rapidly fallen away. There has been a lull in school improvement until a suitable school improvement partner could be found. ACET has now taken over this role. It has taken a strategic approach, securing leadership and safeguarding as a matter of urgency, and ensuring that pupils' behaviour is appropriate. The trust has begun to overhaul policies and procedures, starting with the most urgent, including safeguarding and

whistleblowing.

ACET has supported the chair of governors to secure governance. It has bolstered middle leadership through regular liaison with the trust's specialists in English, mathematics and special educational needs. The trust has introduced a new method for recording and tracking pupils' achievement but as this is brand new, it is too soon for leaders to be able to say for certain how well pupils are progressing.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that the long-term leadership of the school is rapidly resolved
- urgently secure good teaching across key stage 2 so that pupils can begin to make the progress of which they are capable
- embed assessment systems to identify accurately the progress pupils are making and use this information to intervene when progress is waning.