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Mrs Vicki Logan
Interim Executive Headteacher
Rillington Community Primary School
Rillington
Malton
North Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Logan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Rillington Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 November 2019, 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 March 2019.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Ralph
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2019

- As a matter of urgency, leaders should ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are effective by:
 - frequently assessing risks and taking immediate action on potential or identified shortcomings
 - adopting a consistent and thorough approach to staff recruitment, completing all pre-employment checks and maintaining accurate and reliable records
 - making sure that staff in the early years meet the statutory welfare requirements, with particular regard to the staff ratio and qualification requirements and appropriate toileting facilities for children
 - identifying and rectifying specific school-site hazards thoroughly.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - leaders effectively evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils so that staff are held to account for pupils' outcomes
 - assessment information is accurate so that the progress and attainment of groups can be analysed reliably
 - when leaders check the quality of teaching and learning, they focus on its impact in enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders and governors take urgent action to improve the quality of teaching so pupils make more rapid progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - teachers accurately assess pupils' learning and set appropriately challenging work so that all pupils are supported to reach the highest standards possible
 - teachers' subject knowledge is improved to establish consistent whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers match reading books accurately to pupils' abilities and offer more opportunities for pupils to improve their inference, deduction and comprehension skills
 - the teaching of mathematics helps pupils to improve their reasoning skills and problem-solving strategies
 - teachers provide tasks which interest pupils so that incidents of low-level disruption or unfocused behaviour become rare.

- Rectify the weaknesses in governance by ensuring that governors:
 - effectively discharge their statutory duties relating to safeguarding and the Equality Act 2010
 - hold leaders to account for pupils' progress and attainment
 - check that staff provide a curriculum that enables pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and experiences across the full range of statutory subjects.

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 27 to 28 November 2019

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the interim headteacher and the member of staff who maintains recruitment records.

The inspector also met staff, parents, and groups of pupils and heard some pupils read. They met the chair of the interim executive board (IEB) with four other members of the IEB, including a representative from the multi-academy trust and the principal adviser for the local authority. They also met a school improvement representative from the local authority separately.

Inspectors judged safeguarding to be ineffective at the time of the last inspection. Leaders were given this as the first urgent area for improvement. For this reason, safeguarding was identified as the main focus for this monitoring visit.

Context

The headteacher was absent from school following the previous inspection and left in August 2019. The local authority asked successful local headteachers to lead the school temporarily. Two separate headteachers did this during the summer term. Since September 2019 an executive headteacher and an interim headteacher have been leading the school together.

The regional schools commissioner has identified a multi-academy trust to sponsor the school. The conversion to academy status is planned for February 2020. The chief executive officer from Elevate has visited the school to meet governors, parents and staff as part of the consultation process.

The local authority removed the governing body soon after the previous inspection. They appointed a new group of governors. The chair of the IEB is an experienced governor. A representative from the multi-academy trust is also a member of the IEB, along with the principal adviser for the local authority.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

The weaknesses in governance identified at the previous inspection have been resolved. The local authority quickly appointed new governors to an IEB. These new members have the right combination of knowledge and skills to oversee the rapid improvement needed.

The IEB is offering high levels of challenge and holding school leaders to account for the quality of education. Governors are now discharging their statutory duties

relating to the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

Leaders made immediate improvements to the premises, to policies and procedures and to the culture of safeguarding soon after the previous inspection. There is now a rolling programme of risk assessments and frequent premises checks. Governors commissioned a health and safety audit, a fire risk assessment and a safeguarding audit. The IEB meets frequently and checks that all health and safety recommendations are completed.

The statutory requirements for welfare, staff ratios and qualifications are now met in early years. Staff take immediate action to remove or mitigate risks. They follow a toilet cleanliness and monitoring checklist daily. The additional needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully considered. Children's dignity is upheld when their personal and intimate care needs are being met.

Parents and pupils are very pleased with the new perimeter fence. Pupils say that they feel much safer now and that there is no bullying. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. All staff are well trained and vigilant to the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders have introduced a new system to record safeguarding concerns securely. Leaders work closely with other agencies, such as the police and social care, to keep pupils safe.

There is a new system for recording all pre-employment checks. This record is now accurate and reliable. Leaders have checked to make sure that every member of staff has a complete personnel file. There is a consistent and thorough approach to recruiting staff, including the completion of all necessary pre-employment checks.

Quality of education

Changes to leadership arrangements during the summer term slowed the rate of improvement. The current interim headteachers came to the school in September 2019. They are determined to improve the quality of education.

Leaders have prioritised improving the mathematics curriculum. New resources have been introduced and teachers' subject knowledge is developing. The mathematics subject leader welcomes the opportunities he is now being given to develop his leadership role. Leaders have delayed the development of the wider curriculum, in the short term. The multi-academy trust is working on the wider curriculum in its other schools and it plans to share its ideas when the school joins the trust.

Leaders have recently purchased new reading books to ensure that reading books are well matched to pupils' phonics skills and knowledge. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 1 to 3 now have books that they are able to read. However, these pupils are

still reading well below age-related expectations. Leaders are monitoring and evaluating the strategies they are using to make sure that these pupils catch up and keep up with their peers. Leaders want all pupils to be able to read as well as they should for their age.

Leaders are already working very closely with the multi-academy trust. There is frequent communication between the chair of the IEB and the chief executive officer. Senior leaders from the multi-academy meet leaders regularly. The preparation towards transition to academy status is underpinned by a sensible, strategic plan and this is working well.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have identified the right areas for improvement. They are doing the right things, in the right order, to improve the school. Leaders have ensured that the improvement plan is sharply focused on the most pressing issues. It is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Governors monitor the improvement plan closely. Parents say that they have noticed the many improvements since September. They can see that things are changing for the better. Parents shared with the inspector that they are hoping that the new interim headteachers will be able to stay until after February.

Leaders have already given staff many professional development opportunities this term. The interim headteachers are developing the leadership skills of staff within the school, so that middle leaders rely less on external support. Teachers now moderate their assessment judgements at local authority training events or with other teachers from the interim headteachers' own school.

Newly qualified teachers have a structured induction plan that details the training and support they will receive. Teachers say that leaders are reasonable and that they take account of teachers' workload. Teachers say that the many necessary changes are 'being done fairly'. Despite the school having much more work to do, staff morale is high.

A successful and experienced chair of the governing body now leads the IEB. Meetings are now held more frequently. Minutes of governors' meetings show a high level of challenge. Governors ask probing questions to dig deeply into information that leaders provide. Governors are accurate in their evaluation of the progress leaders have made so far. The chair of the IEB has weekly conference calls with senior staff from the multi-academy trust. This is helping the journey towards academisation to run smoothly.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The interim headteachers are effective leaders. They have earned the trust and

confidence of staff, pupils, parents and governors. They have ensured that pupils with SEND have individual plans that meet their needs. They accurately evaluate the quality of education. They are beginning to develop the knowledge and skills of subject leaders. They are improving the teaching of early reading and phonics.

- The chief executive officer has approached the chair of the IEB to request that key members of the IEB continue to serve as local governors once the school joins the multi-academy trust. This is good strategic planning.
- Leaders have worked quickly to make sure that pupils are safe. Safeguarding is effective now.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders removed the website in recent weeks, so statutory information was not published by governors. The new website went live on the first day of this inspection. Leaders have a rolling programme to continue to add statutory information to the website over the coming weeks.
- Some staff continue to be absent long term. This means that some teachers are missing out on all of the new training. Leaders have plans to help these teachers catch up when they return.

External support

The local authority brokered interim leadership arrangements effectively. They monitored the impact of these arrangements closely. In managing the interim leadership arrangements, the local authority recognised that the school needed full-time leadership on site. The current team is a successful headteacher and deputy headteacher partnership who can ensure that one of them is on site every day. Parents like this continuity.

In addition to the school improvement adviser, the local authority has provided effective support in other areas including health and safety, early years, human resources and safeguarding. Pupils are now safe.