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Mr Bloomfield
Principal
Great Yarmouth Primary Academy
Dickens Avenue
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Dear Mr Bloomfield

Special measures monitoring inspection of Great Yarmouth Primary Academy

Following my visit with Andrew Hemmings, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 10 December 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 to improve the school since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the section 5 inspection that took place in November 2018. 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 actions towards the removal of the special measures.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Inspiration multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2018

- Improve leadership, management and governance, by:
 - urgently reviewing and improving the systems and procedures to effectively manage pupils' poor behaviour
 - taking a realistic and systematic approach to self-evaluation that identifies weaknesses as well as strengths
 - ensuring that support from the leaders in the school is effective and that it prioritises improvements based on urgent need
 - providing effective support and training for teaching staff to ensure that they can all deliver the curriculum effectively
 - evaluating the impact of support for pupils with SEND and taking necessary action.
- Improve teaching, learning, assessment and achievement, by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of phonics is effective so that pupils have the reading skills they need to access the curriculum
 - the standard of writing improves across the school
 - teaching and behaviour management strategies support progress, and do not hinder it through time being wasted in lessons.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils, by:
 - making sure that the school's systems and procedures for managing the most challenging behaviour are effective, including the use of the reflection room
 - providing effective training and support for staff who regularly manage challenging behaviour.
- Improve the effectiveness of early years by:
 - ensuring that teachers use their assessments well to plan for the needs, interests and stages of development of children
 - providing more challenging and purposeful opportunities for children to practise and develop their early reading, writing and number skills when choosing their own activities
 - reviewing the allocation of resources, including staffing, to ensure that they are sufficient to help children develop well across all areas of learning, including when outdoors.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 December 2019

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal and other senior leaders. Discussions were also held with subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to other pupils during the lessons. Meetings were also held with the local governing board and the chief executive officer and director of standards of the Inspiration Trust.

Inspectors visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including school information about behaviour and attendance. The inspectors looked at the strength of leaders' improvement plans, and the actions taken so far. The effectiveness of safeguarding was also considered.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit, additional staff have joined the senior leadership team. A phase leader for key stage 2 started at the beginning of the academic year. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) returned after a period of absence. Subject leadership is now more stable. There is a new leader who is the school's reading champion as well as new leaders for English and mathematics. There are three newly qualified teachers working at the school.

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

Leaders have continued to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The leadership team has been strengthened. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. This has contributed to a unified team approach. Leaders' strategies are continuing to make improvements in the quality of education. Teachers are using school-wide approaches to deliver the curriculum. For example, subject-specific vocabulary was repeated verbally. It was used in sentences to help pupils understand the meaning of key terms. Leaders recognise where the teaching of the curriculum is weaker. They are providing professional development to ensure that all teachers understand how to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Following refurbishment of the school, science, music and art rooms have been created and are well equipped. This helps to provide pupils with the appropriate resources to deepen their knowledge and understanding of these subjects. Pupils' work in books shows how they build their knowledge to help them remember what they have learned. For example, in religious education pupils learned about stories from the Bible and related this to the practices in the Christian faith.

Leaders are tackling the weaknesses in reading identified at the previous monitoring inspection. Reading resources are well matched to the sounds pupils know. Pupils practise their phonics in class, often reading with a partner. Leaders are using assessment to ensure that those who require additional support are helped. Leaders are checking how often pupils read individually. This is improving pupils' accuracy and fluency in their reading.

Reading across the school is taking a higher priority. There is a new reading display at the centre of the school building. Reading is celebrated through the promotion of different authors and genres. Leaders have introduced the 'GYPA 100' of books. This is a selection of books that all pupils will read by the time they leave the school. Story time and the sharing of books is an integral part of the timetables. Pupils experience daily adult reading sessions. Leaders' work is developing pupils' engagement with reading.

Leaders' strategies to improve the quality of writing are not yet consistent. This means that the standard of pupils' writing remains variable. Some teachers do not understand leaders' approaches. Many teachers focus on how well pupils write during English lessons. They do not check that pupils apply their skills when writing in different subjects. Repeated errors in grammar, punctuation and handwriting are not addressed. As a result, the quality of writing is not improving at the same rate as that in reading.

Leaders of SEND have introduced new approaches to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders have identified different systems to support pupils' speech and language development, especially those in key stage 1. Initial assessments have been carried out. However, this work is at an early stage. A nurture base has been created for pupils with high levels of social and emotional needs. This is helping to support pupils. However, this provision does not yet provide enough academic support for the pupils who access it.

There has been a reduction in the rate of fixed-term exclusions. For a core of pupils, the rate of fixed-term exclusions still remains too high. The nurture provision is being developed to help meet the complex needs of these pupils. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this support. The strategies for managing pupils' behaviour in class are working well. Teachers have high expectations for how pupils behave. Pupils listen attentively and follow adults' instructions promptly. This ensures that pupils sustain their concentration on their work. Leaders are checking that the use of the reflection room for managing pupils' challenging behaviour is appropriate. Adults who supervise the pupils have received additional training. Adults are taking time to talk to pupils about their behaviour. They deal with concerns quickly so that problems do not escalate into more serious issues.

Pupils move calmly around the school. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is improving. They can recite the '5 Ss' to help to remind them about how they should listen to their teachers and show that they are ready for learning. Pupils still say

there is some poor behaviour. They are now more confident that adults will do something to help.

The early years continues to improve. New staff are quickly getting to know children and plan appropriately for them. Children play well together. The indoor learning environment gives children opportunities to talk and use books. In Reception, teachers encourage children to use their phonics in different writing activities. For example, while making Christmas cards children were questioned about the different sounds that made up the message inside the card. However, adults do not routinely check that children are purposeful during their independent activities. As a result, some children quickly lose interest and flit between activities. This hinders their progress in the early years. The outdoor area for the Reception children also remains a weakness in the provision. Activities are not routinely set up to encourage children to play outside to access the full curriculum of the early years.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The principal leads a knowledgeable and committed team of school leaders. With close support from the trust, leaders have continued to make improvements. Some actions are still new, and as yet unproven. Leaders have a secure grasp of what needs to be done next. Leaders' improvement plans correctly prioritise the most urgent actions. Governors are sharply focused on holding leaders to account for the improvements which leaders have planned.

Staffing has greater stability. Staff benefit from professional opportunities. This is ensuring that there is more consistent teaching across the school. Newly qualified teachers feel particularly well supported by school leaders and the trust. Staff say that leaders are approachable. Leaders ensure that teachers' workload is considered when new decisions are made about improving the school.

Safeguarding is effective. The processes for vetting the suitability of staff and visitors are well maintained and up to date. Staff are well trained. They are alert to any risks to pupils' welfare, particularly the most vulnerable. Leaders of safeguarding are knowledgeable about the local risks in the community. They are tenacious in pursuing support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Where this is not available, leaders have developed their own provision and skills to give the support and help that is needed.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders at all levels are clear about their roles in supporting school improvement. They have a shared view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that key actions are prioritised so that they have the strongest impact upon improvement.
- Leaders understand how to improve reading. Leaders place a high importance on getting pupils to read. Pupils are using phonics effectively to read with greater

fluency and access the curriculum.

- Leaders and staff are raising expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff have confidence in the school's systems for managing behaviour. Pupils understand what is expected for their behaviour and are attentive in class.
- Leaders have established an effective safeguarding culture in the school. The pastoral team provides early help for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Teachers do not understand how to use leaders' approaches to improve writing. Teachers do not ensure that pupils apply their writing skills across the curriculum. Standards of writing are not yet high enough.
- New strategies have been introduced to support pupils with SEND. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these new approaches.
- For a core of pupils, fixed-term exclusion rates are still too high. Leaders have not fully developed the nurture provision so that the complex needs of these pupils are met. Leaders do not check that pupils who access the provision receive sufficient academic support.
- The outdoor provision in the Reception classes is not fully developed. This means that children do not have opportunity to develop all areas of learning when they go outside. Adults do not ensure that all children are engaged in purposeful learning during their independent chosen activities.

External support

The trust is making effective use of external specialists to help identify the next steps and further improve the rate of improvement.