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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ian McCrae
Head of School
Kingsley Primary Academy
Thomson Crescent
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 3JT

Dear Mr McCrae

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingsley Primary Academy

Following my visit with Alison Colenso, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 25 to 26 February 2020, 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 October 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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Croydon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Pupils do not study subjects, other than English and mathematics, in sufficient depth. The curriculum is not broad or balanced. Leaders need to review the curriculum so that it is at least similar in breadth and ambition to the national curriculum.
- The pace of school improvement has been too slow. Leaders need to prioritise and work together to improve the quality of education and pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders' and governors' monitoring of the school's work lacks rigour. They need to have a better oversight of the curriculum. They must ensure that all pupils have equal access to a broad curriculum, no matter what class they are in.
- The roles and responsibilities of leaders and staff are unclear. Leaders need to inform staff about their specific roles and responsibilities. These need to be equitable in terms of workload so that staff are not overburdened.
- Subject leaders do not have the opportunity to develop their areas of responsibility. They should have a greater impact in the quality of subject planning, teaching and the achievement of pupils. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have time to carry out their monitoring roles effectively. Subject leaders should have an accurate understanding of the strengths, and address weaknesses, in their curriculum areas.
- Leaders need to act swiftly to support the weakest readers in key stage 1. Where staff show insecure phonics knowledge, they need training to improve this. Targets for early readers need to be specific and reading books should match the sounds they have learned.
- Leaders and staff do not routinely identify the areas where children's language skills can develop. Staff in the early years should take every opportunity to develop children's language skills across the curriculum.
- The school does not have a consistent approach to behaviour management. This has a negative impact on pupils' education and takes up too much staff time and effort. Leaders need to support staff effectively in managing poor behaviour. They need to review how they deal with challenging behaviour so that it is dealt with effectively and the proportion of fixed-term exclusions continues to reduce.
- Pupils' attendance remains low. Leaders should adapt their strategies to address poor attendance and work with parents to help them understand the importance of good attendance.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 25 to 26 February 2020

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer and the vice-chair of the board of trustees. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers and with pupils in lessons and around the school at breaktime and at lunchtime. They heard the youngest pupils read. They also met with members of staff, including those responsible for overseeing attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

This monitoring inspection focused on leaders' oversight of the curriculum and the curriculum offer, as well as pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors focused deeply on reading, geography and science. All other subjects were considered as part of the inspection. Inspectors discussed these subjects with pupils, staff and leaders. They visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

Context

Trustees have acted quickly to ensure that appropriate leadership is in place to hold school leaders to account. Following the removal of the local governing body, trustees have formed a skilled interim board. This interim board consists of a chief executive officer from the trust, the chair of trustees and the vice-chair of trustees, who is also a national leader of governance.

Since the school was judged to require special measures in October 2019, pupil numbers have declined. The number of classes in key stage 1 and Year 4 have dropped. There are now three classes in Years 2 and 4, and two classes in Year 1. Following the last inspection, a chief executive officer for the trust and a deputy headteacher have left the school. There is uncertainty about the future of the school. The trust has entered into discussions with the Department for Education and the regional schools commissioner around the potential re-brokering of the school. Parents have been informed. Although the decision to re-broker the school has not been finalised, the trust's aim is for the school to be matched with a potential sponsor before the start of the next academic year.

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

Leaders, staff and the trust have worked together to begin rectifying the deficiencies found in the curriculum. The school's planned curriculum is now as ambitious as the aims of the national curriculum. Pupils are increasingly enthusiastic about their learning and can talk about the range of subjects they study. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 now study a modern foreign language. Science is taught regularly

across the school and staff and pupils can share the many improvements to the science curriculum.

Training and working together in curriculum teams has supported staff in understanding the ambitious aims and expectations of each subject. Leaders have prioritised the setting out of a coherently sequenced curriculum plan and the identification of the skills pupils need to master across the school. Consequently, curriculum leaders have produced detailed skills progression maps for their subjects. However, leaders have not evaluated whether the new curriculum, in its early stages of development, is ensuring that pupils know and remember more knowledge. The use of assessment is in the early stages of development.

The school's approach to assessment is focused on tests in the core subjects of English and mathematics and checks on the key skills identified in the progression of skills maps. The acquisition of skills in a subject, what pupils can do, is emphasised as the curriculum goals. Although teachers can explain what pupils should do, they cannot explain how the skills develop over time. In addition, less focus is placed on what knowledge pupils need to understand and remember in each subject. Also, some staff have made changes to the curriculum planning without leaders' knowledge. There is inconsistency in how the curriculum is being implemented.

The strengths identified at the last inspection continue. Children learn to read as soon as they join the school. They follow a structured reading programme in the early years. This is well taught. The early reading and English leaders have benefited greatly from support provided by a specialist leader of education from an outstanding school within the trust. They have produced suitable action plans to address the key area for improvement around reading.

The early reading and English leaders have been instrumental in planning for a structured reading programme across the school. It is still early days; however an improved, structured reading programme is now in place across the early years and key stage 1. Staff now know what pupils can and cannot do. There is a new sense of urgency to teach the weakest readers to be fluent across the school. Teachers have dedicated time to read to pupils, promoting a love of reading. Staff who deliver reading support are trained in delivering the phonics programme.

Curriculum leaders for English and early reading have reviewed the literature on offer at the school. For the teaching of phonics and early reading, all books used in lessons have been matched to the sounds that early readers know. However, there is limited availability of suitable books. Not all the books taken home by the youngest children to practise reading are well-matched to the sounds they have learned. This slows their reading fluency.

The school's behaviour policy has been reviewed by leaders. It meets the needs of many pupils at the school, but not the significant group of pupils with the greatest

need. As a result, behaviour is still not good enough. Instances remain where pupils are off-task in lessons. Issues can re-occur over time, particularly during lunchtimes, where supervisors have not been fully briefed on the specific circumstances of pupils. Leaders have not ensured that there is clarity between all staff and leaders around how challenging behaviour is dealt with.

The attendance team are ambitious for all pupils to attend school regularly. They are clear that this is an ongoing area for development. Much effective work has been done to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. A clear plan is in place and many actions are underway. Leaders closely track attendance and punctuality. Since the last inspection, punctuality has improved greatly, and persistent absence has declined. However, attendance remains below the national average.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

With the support from the trust, school leaders have undertaken a full review of the school's curriculum offer. They have adopted the aims of the national curriculum and the local authority's locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils now access a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have taken swift action in addressing the first key area for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Leaders have prioritised working together with staff to improve the quality of education. Staff training for planning a coherent school curriculum is supporting them to raise their expectations.

A whole-school curriculum overview is in place and subject planning is developing. Medium-term plans have been written for all subjects up to the summer term; work is ongoing. All pupils now have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that suitable systems are in place for monitoring the implementation of the agreed curriculum. Leaders have also not suitably considered the impact on teachers' workload, following recent changes to how year-group planning, preparation and assessment time are organised.

The interim board is clear about its role in supporting and challenging leaders to secure improvement. It met swiftly with parents following the last inspection in October 2019 to inform them of its plans to improve the school. The interim board has made sure that leaders keep parents fully informed of the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Minutes from meetings and supporting documentation demonstrate the interim board's understanding of successful school improvement and what it looks like. The impact of the board's challenge and oversight is noticeable through the improvements seen so far in attendance and the curriculum offer. Both the trust's statement of action and the school's improvement plan are fit for purpose. They have been updated and modified to include the likely financial requirements of each action. However, recent staffing changes at the trust mean that they will not now be

able to fully support the school as needed. The school has started to receive support from the local authority.

Safeguarding remains effective. Leaders have a deep understanding of the safeguarding needs and concerns of the school community. They are swift to follow up any unresolved issues and make sure that training for staff is relevant and of good quality.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Staffing at the school has remained stable. Staff are keen to support leaders in their aim to improve the quality of education.
- Leaders are willing to reach out for support from others who have experience of securing improvement.
- A further strength is the improvement in pupils' punctuality and the reduction of persistent absence.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders' communication regarding how the school supports pupils with the most challenging behaviours remains unclear. A lack of clarity exists between staff and leaders around how challenging behaviour is addressed.
- Pupils' acquisition of knowledge in the curriculum has not been clearly identified in all subjects.
- Uncertainty remains about the future of the school. No firm decision has been made around the potential re-brokering of this academy. The trust has said that it is not in a position to offer a range of support needed for the school to continue to improve.

External support

The support provided by the trust has helped leaders to begin the process of improvement. However, following a recent staffing re-structure, the trust does not now have the capacity to provide the range of support and guidance needed. The school has welcomed the support from the local authority, including future planning for closer working partnerships.