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Janine King
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Dear Ms King

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Wold Academy

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in July 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures by ensuring that swift referrals are made to appropriate external agencies, and followed up where necessary, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to keep them safe.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's performance, including how well all pupils are learning over time
 - improvement plans are focused on improving pupils' progress and leaders are held to account effectively for implementing the plans
 - senior and middle leaders receive professional development to enable them to thoroughly check the quality of teaching and take suitable actions to improve it swiftly
 - a suitable system is in place to evaluate how well pupils are learning in a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, and improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - teaching staff have appropriate subject knowledge in all the subjects they teach
 - teaching identifies and addresses pupils' gaps in learning, misconceptions and errors effectively in all subjects
 - pupils apply age-appropriate handwriting and English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills consistently in their writing in all subjects.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by ensuring that:
 - the curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain by developing a better understanding of how others live their lives
 - attendance improves for the minority of pupils who are persistently absent
 - pupils' conduct around the school is consistently calm and considerate of others
 - pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning in the classroom and take pride in all aspects of their work.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 March 2020

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal; a deputy designated safeguarding leader; the subject leaders for English, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE); a group of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 teachers; the chair of the academy scrutiny committee, one of the trust's regional directors, the trust's director of primary education and pupils in classrooms.

Context

The academy scrutiny committee has been strengthened by the addition of a principal from another school in the trust. A vice-principal has been seconded to the school from a trust school.

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

Leaders have adopted the trust's core knowledge curriculum (CKC) throughout the school. The implementation of the CKC is at an early stage. It is stronger in some subject areas, such as RE, than in others.

Teachers and teaching assistants understand the crucial importance of developing and widening pupils' vocabulary alongside the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Although very recent, the school's work on vocabulary is beginning to have an impact in upper key stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 6 are using a much wider range of vocabulary now than they were at the beginning of the academic year.

Senior leaders have ensured that all staff in the early years and key stage 1 have attended a two-day training course in the school's chosen phonics scheme. However, standards in Year 1 are not as high as they should be. Too many pupils, who are just learning to read, do not arrive at school on time. As a result, they miss their phonics lessons on a regular basis. They fall behind their peers and are unable to access the planned curriculum because of poor reading skills.

Leaders have prioritised the development of pupils' handwriting and presentation. Children in the Reception Year are forming their letters correctly and are beginning to place them on the line correctly. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' handwriting and presentation skills remain inconsistent. Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils use a beautiful joined handwriting script and present their work well. This is not the case throughout the school.

The curriculum leaders for RE and PSHE have taken assertive action to improve pupils' first-hand knowledge of how others live their lives. For example, pupils have

visited another primary school in Hull. At this new partnership school, the majority of pupils speak English as an additional language compared to a very small proportion at Wold Academy. Pupils enjoy the half-termly debates that the curriculum leaders have established. Consequently, they are knowledgeable about current affairs, such as the development of a hijab by an international sportswear company. Curriculum leaders have implemented the schemes of work for RE and PSHE and, consequently, pupils are receiving a better quality of education.

Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Simple routines and practices have been established and are paying dividends. For example, teachers and teaching assistants are now visible in the corridors as pupils travel around the school. As a result, there are far fewer incidents of poor behaviour during the less-structured times of the school day.

The actions taken by leaders to improve pupils' attendance are bearing fruit. More pupils attend school every day. The number who are persistently absent is reducing.

The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders acted quickly to improve the culture of safeguarding in the school following the last inspection. The trust's initial audit of safeguarding was supplemented by an external audit of safeguarding in September 2020. The external audit found safeguarding at Wold Academy to be 'compliant, effective and thorough'. Systems and procedures have been strengthened. For example, all safeguarding records are now kept online. Leaders analyse the records, identify most trends and report to the academy scrutiny committee. They have ensured that all staff know what to do if they see signs of radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants understand the trust's CKC. All benefited from training delivered recently by one of the trust's trustees (an acknowledged expert in implementing a knowledge-based approach to curriculum planning) on the development of a knowledge-rich curriculum. Senior leaders are ambitious for their pupils. They are determined that pupils will build up a store of knowledge, skills and vocabulary to prepare them well for secondary schooling. Teachers and teaching assistants value highly the training they have attended since the previous inspection, especially the training on the acquisition of vocabulary.

Leaders have taken action to address teachers' workload. Curriculum leaders value the non-contact time they are allocated to lead developments in their subjects. For example, the curriculum leader for English uses her non-contact time wisely to improve the quality of education provided for pupils through modelling and coaching. She has an accurate view of the quality of education in her subject and acknowledges that improvements remain inconsistent across the school. Senior leaders acknowledge that this inconsistency is typical across subjects.

Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and based on up-to-date evidence. The school's improvement plans and the trust's statement of action are detailed. Both include timescales by which actions need to be carried out, together with the arrangements to monitor and evaluate their impact.

Members of the academy scrutiny committee challenge the principal and senior leaders during visits to the school. For example, recently, they have asked how persistent absence is monitored, how many educational visits there have been to non-Christian places of worship and why too many pupils in Year 1 do not achieve the standard in the phonics screening check. The chair of the academy scrutiny committee is pleased that the school's rate of improvement has quickened this term.

The trust's director of primary, chief executive officer and chair of trustees are 'all over' the academy's progress. The trust has brokered successful senior leadership secondments. In addition, the trust arranged weekly visits by an assistant principal from one of their northern schools. The assistant principal works with subject leaders to improve the provision in the subjects they lead.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders are working proactively with the trust and the local authority to improve the provision for children in the early years. As a result, the provision is improving rapidly.
- Pupils have noticed that their peers' behaviour is improving. They say that they can concentrate in lessons and are safe and secure in and around school.
- Staff at all levels understand the trust's CKC. Pupils are beginning to acquire the knowledge, skills and vocabulary required to succeed at secondary schooling.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Not enough has been done to ensure that pupils arrive punctually for school. Too many pupils are late and miss their phonics and reading lessons.
- Despite staff attending phonics training, the delivery of the school's chosen scheme of work is inconsistent across classes.
- Pupils' spelling remains poor.
- The numbers of behaviour incidents are not analysed regularly. Leaders are missing a vital opportunity to measure the impact of their actions.

External support

Officers from the local authority have worked in partnership with the trust to improve the provision for children in the early years.

Only in exceptional circumstances, where they are crucial to the school's future success, should priorities for further improvement be added

- Leaders should work with parents and carers to ensure that the proportion of pupils who arrive on time for school increases.