

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



2 June 2021

Nicola Kent
Headteacher
King's Sutton Primary Academy
Richmond Street
Kings Sutton
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX17 3RT

Dear Mrs Kent

Special measures monitoring inspection of King's Sutton Primary Academy

Following my visit with Hazel Henson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 and 13 May 2021, 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 June 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Prime7 multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Varnam
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 May 2021

Context

A new headteacher was appointed in May 2020. Most local governors and some trustees have been recently appointed.

At the time of the inspection, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is also the class teacher for Years 5 and 6, was absent from work. An experienced SENCo from within the trust is covering this role. A long-term supply teacher currently teaches the Year 3 class. A new class teacher has been appointed for September 2021.

Leaders continue to implement plans for improvement. However, some parts of these plans have not been acted on fully due to the impact of COVID-19. Some teachers have been unable to receive planned training. Until recently, leaders have not been able to check the impact of actions to improve the school due to the safety measures in place to prevent the spread of the virus.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Trustees have acted quickly to stabilise the senior leadership of the school. The headteacher, together with the chief executive officer of the trust, has brought a renewed energy to the school's improvement journey. Leaders are more ambitious than was previously the case. They are determined to provide the best possible education for each pupil. However, they know that there is much work still to do to realise this ambition.

The headteacher has earned the trust and respect of staff. Most staff say that they feel valued and listened to. Staff morale is improving. A typical comment from staff was, 'The headteacher makes time for us. She cares about us.'

Leaders continue to work tirelessly to build positive relationships with parents and carers. They value the views of parents and are keen to work with them as partners in their children's education. Parents recognise the improvements that leaders are making. One parent summed up the views of many by saying that, 'Huge efforts have been made. The staff are taking the school forwards.'

The leadership of mathematics is a growing strength. The mathematics leader has been trained well. She knows what is working well in the subject and what needs to improve. In a short space of time, leaders have developed a coherent mathematics curriculum. Teachers understand what knowledge they need to teach and when. They deliver lesson content in small steps, which allows pupils to build understanding throughout the lesson. Most pupils are achieving better than they were previously. However, there are still some occasions when teachers do not choose activities or resources that are appropriate to develop pupils' knowledge and

understanding. When this happens, some pupils switch off from learning or become easily confused.

The curriculums for reading and phonics continue to improve. Leaders are committed to making sure that pupils learn to read fluently as soon as possible. Staff have been trained well. They use this training to teach strategies, such as 'Fred talk', consistently to help pupils read words. The books that most pupils read are well matched to the phonics knowledge they already have. However, some children in the Reception class do not always have opportunities to practise reading. Some of the books chosen for them do not contain words. This limits these children's ability to use the knowledge they have to read simple words. Leaders are passionate about developing pupils' love of reading. The 'book fairy' regularly visits classes, leaving book gifts. The pupils read these books and become immersed in new language and vocabulary. More pupils enjoy reading than was previously the case. When we asked pupils if they get time to read with adults in school, they replied, 'lots!'

Staff in early years continue to develop a stronger understanding of what children know and can do in literacy and mathematics. Most children achieve well in these areas. However, across some aspects of learning, staff do not always choose activities that help to deepen children's knowledge. Some children do not have a good enough understanding of the world around them.

Leaders' approach to developing the wider curriculum is a significant weakness and barrier to improvement. They have not given enough time and focus to building an effective curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers do not know what knowledge they need to teach pupils in the foundation subjects. Leaders have not ensured that the schemes of work that teachers use in these subjects build on what pupils already know. Leaders have not yet fully considered the training that staff will need to teach all foundation subjects effectively. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in the foundation subjects.

The trust SENCo has high expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. In the short time she has worked in the school, she has had a positive impact. She has put in place systems to make sure that pupils with SEND are correctly identified and get the support they need. However, leaders' high expectations are not understood by all staff. Some teachers do not know how to adapt the curriculum well enough so that pupils with SEND learn the same knowledge as others. The trust SENCo has a range of training planned. However, some of this is yet to begin.

Leaders have rigorous safeguarding systems in place to keep pupils safe from harm. They have adapted these systems to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Leaders have made sure that staff are well trained. Staff use this knowledge to report concerns swiftly. Leaders act on these concerns to ensure that pupils and families

get the help that they need. Leaders keep meticulous records of safeguarding incidents.

Leaders make sure that the behaviour policy is clear and understood by all staff. Staff have received training so that they can apply the policy effectively throughout all parts of the school day. Most pupils' behaviour is improving. However, there are still occasions when some pupils' behaviour disrupts lessons. This is typically when teaching is weaker. Some of these pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning. Too many pupils do not take enough pride in their work.

Leaders have mapped out what they want pupils to learn to improve their personal development. They have acted quickly to ensure that the school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum meets the requirements of the Department for Education's relationships and sex education statutory guidance. Leaders have introduced a 'reading spine', a set of books that encourages pupils to read texts from other cultures and stories written by authors with different protected characteristics. Despite this, pupils are unprepared for life in modern Britain. They have a weak understanding of different faiths and traditions. Pupils do not always know how to stay safe online. Some pupils do not have a positive view of the school. They do not feel proud to attend King's Sutton Academy.

The governance of the school is rapidly improving. Members of the board of trustees and local governors are a cohesive team. They make sure that members of the board have a wide range of expertise. They are becoming increasingly skilled in holding leaders to account. In a short period of time, trustees and local governors have gained an exact understanding of the school's curriculum. They have a clear vision for how this will improve moving forwards. Trustees continue to use external expertise to check the impact of leaders' actions. They make sure that they are not solely reliant on the information that leaders give them.

Priorities for further improvement

- Across all foundation subjects, leaders must urgently develop curriculums that are ambitious for all pupils. They must identify what knowledge pupils will learn and when.

Additional support

The trust continues to provide effective support. The chief executive officer knows the school well. The trust uses this knowledge to supply targeted resources. The trust has acted quickly to support the school's leadership of SEND. The trust SENCo has been deployed to provide increased leadership capacity. The chief executive officer currently provides a day of support to the school. This will increase to two days from September 2021. The focus of this support will be on improving subject leadership and the wider curriculum.

The school has benefited from support from the local hubs for English and mathematics. Leaders and teachers have received training in phonics and mathematics. Senior leaders value this support.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the temporary SENCo, the leaders responsible for English, mathematics, physical education and history, the chief executive officer for the multi-academy trust, two groups of pupils, a group of staff and three representatives of those responsible for governance.