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Martha Hughes
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hughes

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Langer Primary Academy

Following my visit with Maureen Su, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15-16 June 2021, 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 March 2020. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

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 serious weaknesses designation.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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

Yours sincerely

Hannah Stoten
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 15 June 2021 to 16 June 2021

Context

A new chair of governors was appointed in April 2020. A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the school in September 2020. In January 2021, a member of staff became acting deputy headteacher.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders and governors are making positive changes to the school's culture. Their actions are improving the quality of pupils' education through consistent and focused work to implement the school's improvement plans. They have an accurate understanding of what has been achieved, and what remains to be done. Most staff and parents welcome the improvements being brought into the school.

Leaders and teachers have made significant improvements in the provision in the early years. Effective curriculum planning is ensuring that children are developing their phonics knowledge, while also developing interesting vocabulary and knowledge about the natural world. For example, through topics such as the lifecycle of a butterfly, children learn how to use equipment, how to follow instructions and how to work with partners. In music, children have been taught how to hold and use the instruments and enjoy using the hand bells to make 'patterns' of sounds. The outside area is well resourced. Pupils engage in purposeful activities which help reinforce their learning, including developing their early mathematics and writing skills.

Leaders have improved the teaching of phonics in both the early years and Years 1 and 2. Leaders are ensuring that teachers are consistent in their use of the new phonics programme. Leaders check the quality of teaching closely and assess pupils' progress accurately. As a result, the youngest children in the school are swiftly becoming readers. Other aspects of the reading curriculum are helping pupils to increase their vocabulary, to improve their interactions with each other and to develop their love of reading.

Despite these strengths, leaders have identified that some older pupils, including some with special educational needs and disabilities, struggle to read fluently. These pupils are not currently receiving sufficient support to develop their phonics and reading knowledge quickly enough, so that they are ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders have plans in place to address this, but these have yet to be implemented.

In most curriculum subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the most important things that pupils should learn, the order in which to teach them and the

assessment approaches required. Training has helped teachers to ensure that what they teach builds on what pupils know and remember. These improvements are more evident in some subjects, such as mathematics, science, geography and history. These curriculum approaches are giving leaders and teachers clear information about what pupils know and can do. In some other subjects, curriculum and assessment plans are at a very early stage of implementation. In these subjects, it is less clear to teachers what pupils should know, already know and can do.

One aspect of the school's vision is 'we care'; this is well reflected in interactions between pupils and adults. Relationships are positive and pupils are typically polite and welcoming. Attendance across all age groups has increased and persistent absence, though remaining too high, has decreased significantly. Leaders say that improved relationships with families have contributed to the overall improvement in attendance. Leaders know the children and their families well. They are working effectively with outside agencies to help improve attendance.

Beyond the curriculum, leaders have thought carefully about the types of enrichment activities that would be beneficial to the children at the school. This is provided through a programme of assemblies, leadership opportunities, and clubs. Pupils spoke about attending a range of clubs. Pupils are confident that different people are accepted at their school and they know how to keep safe online, how to have healthy relationships and who to talk to if they have concerns.

Additional support

Leaders and staff value the guidance and training from trust leaders. Trust leaders have delivered training on safeguarding, curriculum development and leadership. At the start of the second national lockdown, the trust provided extra training on how to deliver lessons online. Teachers spoke highly of this training. They also value the planning and resources available for subjects in the wider curriculum.

Trust leaders provide effective challenge and support. They also prioritise the well-being of leaders and staff.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and staff. Inspectors also met with the headteacher, senior leaders, representatives of the multi-academy trust, the chief executive officer, teachers, pupils and representatives of those responsible for governance. Inspectors reviewed 28 responses from Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and six responses from Ofsted's survey for staff.

