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13 July 2021

Mr Mathew Atkinson
Acting executive headteacher
Woodfield Primary School
Woodfield Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Atkinson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Woodfield Primary School

Following my visit with Alex Thorp, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 23 and 24 June 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 most 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 January 2020. 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.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chairs of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Scargill-Knight

Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 June 2021

Context

There have been considerable changes in staffing since the last inspection. Two teachers and the school's headteacher have left the school. The acting executive headteacher and acting head of school began working in the school in the summer term of 2020. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and a curriculum leader were appointed in the summer term 2020. One new teacher joined the school in September 2020.

Five new governors joined the governing body in the last academic year. One has since left.

The governing body has worked with the local authority to explore academy conversion. A suitable sponsor had not been agreed at the time of the inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders and staff are working well together to systematically improve this school. Leaders have the full support of a committed staff team. Parents are positive about the school. All those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents.

Leaders have begun to develop the curriculum for each subject. The curriculum for mathematics is well sequenced. The important subject knowledge that pupils need to learn is set out clearly. The way in which the mathematics curriculum is organised and taught is helping pupils to learn and remember more.

In subjects across the wider curriculum, such as science and geography, leaders have begun to identify the subject knowledge that they want pupils to learn. However, plans do not currently set out the smaller steps of learning within year groups, to ensure that pupils reach the ambitious end points that leaders have set. Leaders are working with teachers to develop this aspect of their curriculum plans.

Pupils who need help to catch up with the school's chosen phonics programme take part in extra reading sessions. Staff who deliver these sessions have not had training to support pupils effectively. As a result, some pupils do not receive the help they need to become fluent and confident readers.

Leaders have created a pupil premium strategy. While this outlines some of the broad actions that they are taking to improve the quality of education, it does not specifically set out how disadvantaged pupils will be supported to catch up quickly. Governors do not check that the pupil premium grant is being used successfully to support disadvantaged pupils' progress.

The support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive has improved. The SENCo has introduced learning plans for pupils with SEND. These plans detail strategies for adults to use to help pupils. Because teachers are now clear about how they should support pupils with SEND, these pupils are able to access the curriculum successfully.

Leaders have reviewed the school's behaviour policy and organised training for staff to help them manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils now listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to learn. The use of fixed-term exclusion has reduced significantly since the last inspection because there are fewer instances of poor behaviour.

Leaders have introduced strong systems for monitoring pupils' attendance. Leaders quickly identify when a pupil is not attending regularly. They provide support for families to make sure that pupils' attendance improves. Pupils are praised and rewarded for attending school regularly. As a result, attendance is improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing.

Leaders' plans to provide pupils with experiences that will develop their understanding of their local community and life in modern Britain have been hindered by COVID-19 restrictions. For example, a planned residential visit to London and a trip to an outdoor education centre have been postponed. However, leaders have found alternative approaches to supporting pupils' personal development during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. They have introduced a new programme to develop team-building skills and resilience. Pupils experienced a session with an author to discuss his work and the educational route he had taken. An after-school club, led by coaches from Harrogate Town Association Football Club, has recently started. Leaders have plans to introduce a dance and multi-sports club, now that some restrictions have been lifted.

While some new governors have added additional expertise to the governing body, governors remain too reliant on what school leaders tell them. Governors do not check that leaders' actions are improving the quality of education that pupils receive. The local authority has recently provided training for governors. It is too soon to see the impact of this work. Improving governance remains a priority.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and their colleagues. They feel that leaders care about their well-being and help them to manage their workload.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that staff who deliver catch-up support in reading receive training so that these sessions enable pupils to become fluent and confident readers.

Additional support

The local authority has brokered the support of the school's acting executive headteacher and acting head of school. This has brought stability to the school's leadership.

Specialist leaders of education from a local teaching school have worked with the subject leader for mathematics to formulate an action plan. The SENCo has also received support from a specialist leader of education to help her establish systems to identify and support pupils with SEND.

Evidence

We observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting executive headteacher, the acting head of school, and subject leaders. We spoke to representatives from the governing body, including one of the co-chairs. We also spoke to a representative from the local authority. We visited a range of lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke to pupils and saw pupils reading with a familiar member of staff. We also spoke to several parents on the playground, and looked at 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The views of staff were considered by analysing 11 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and by speaking to a number of staff.