

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Motiur Rahman
Headteacher
Sprites Primary Academy
Stonechat Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP2 0SA

Dear Mr Rahman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sprites Primary Academy

Following my visit with Steve Mellors, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 and 2 March 2022, 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 October 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We discussed the ongoing 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 those responsible for governance 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 the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Reach2 multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 March 2022

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in May 2021, there have been changes to leadership, governance and staff. The deputy headteacher joined the school on a part-time basis in December 2021. He became full-time in January 2022. In September 2021, three middle leaders were appointed to the roles of curriculum leader, writing leader and personal development leader.

In May 2021, one teacher left the school. At the end of the summer term 2021, four teachers left the school. Two early years teachers went on leave. In September 2021, five teachers joined the school. Two special educational needs learning support assistants were also appointed. In January 2022, one teacher left, and another joined the school.

In September 2021, the trust replaced the intervention board with the local governing body, which now provides governance to the school. The previous chair of the intervention board became the chair of the local governing body.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous monitoring inspection, senior leaders and staff have continued to strengthen the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders have thought carefully about pupils' academic needs, as well as their personal and social needs. Leaders have developed an ambitious and relevant curriculum. They have chosen to introduce key concepts in their curriculum, such as democracy, and health and well-being. These concepts are taught and built on throughout all year groups. These support pupils to develop their understanding of local and world issues.

Senior leaders have a clear view of the steps required to continue to improve the school. The most recent school development plan identifies the actions needed to make the biggest difference to pupils. The plan is comprehensive and detailed. Leaders have considered how improvement actions will be checked to ensure that they have a positive impact on the quality of education that the school provides. In some areas, such as the implementation of leaders' curriculum in the foundation subjects, it is too early to see the impact on pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders know that there have been unusual pressures in recent times. There has been some staff absence due to COVID-19. Leaders have considered staff workload carefully. As a result, staff work together well and they commit wholeheartedly to improving the school. Parents recognise the improvements that are being made to the school's provision.

There continues to be a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive essential safeguarding training and regular updates to ensure that their safeguarding knowledge remains strong. Safeguarding policies and practices are clear and well

understood. Staff are vigilant. They check that pupils are safe, and report any concerns swiftly. Leaders act quickly to address any concerns that may arise to ensure pupils and families receive the help they need. Leaders keep comprehensive records of their actions.

Senior leaders are rightly focusing on strengthening the leadership team and on curriculum development. To this end, leaders have established several new middle leadership roles. Middle leaders have received specific training to carry out their roles effectively. They are confident and able to lead their subjects, or areas, with increasing success. In some subjects, their actions are very new and so the impact of these on improving the quality of education is not yet evident.

Curriculum planning in all subjects has been reviewed and revised. As a result, the curriculum for most subjects is more streamlined and easier for teachers to follow. The knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are set out clearly. In a few subjects, such as mathematics and physical education, teachers deliver leaders' curriculum plans successfully and their own subject knowledge is much improved. However, in other subjects, the implementation of the revised curriculum is still at an early stage. For example, in history and art, teachers do not always have a secure grasp of how to deliver leaders' plans effectively. Likewise, not all teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach leaders' plans well. Teachers are less clear about how to secure subject-specific knowledge in pupils' memory. This means that pupils do not routinely remember the knowledge they have learned in previous lessons. They do not make connections with what they know already so that their understanding builds up over time.

Senior leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. The reading curriculum, including phonics, continues to improve. The reading leader works closely with specialist teachers from a local English hub. Staff have received further training in the school's chosen phonics programme. Pupils in the early years and key stage 1 receive daily phonics sessions. Staff have identified where pupils are not securely grasping the letters and sounds they should know. Pupils who need extra help with reading receive appropriate support. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils learn. This helps them to catch up quickly. Since the previous inspection, the reading curriculum for pupils in key stage 2 has strengthened. Teaching plans and lessons focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension. The curriculum includes more time for pupils to practise reading skills such as evaluation and inference. This is helping to remedy pupils' gaps in their reading knowledge and skills.

Leaders are determined to develop pupils' love of reading. Leaders have invested in a wide range of reading books for pupils to read. They have created many inviting reading areas within the school. Pupils told us that they read 'a lot more now' and that the school has 'many more great books' for them to read. The impact of leaders' actions to raise the profile of reading across the school is evident.

Leaders have recently strengthened the English curriculum to support pupils' writing. Teachers are currently receiving training to use the revised plans that set out what knowledge and skills pupils need to be taught and when. Teachers are beginning to teach

pupils the skills to master different writing styles more effectively. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that this is supporting pupils to become more confident and skilful writers.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Staff have received training and there is now much more ambition for these pupils. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is building teachers' understanding in how to support and meet pupils' additional needs more effectively. Personalised plans are in place that help teachers to adapt learning for pupils so that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum successfully.

Children in early years are happy and safe. Relationships between staff and children are positive. Children respond quickly to teachers' instructions. They share resources with each other and take turns well. Children enjoy their phonics lessons and sharing the many reading books on display. However, there is more work to be done to make sure that the early years curriculum across all areas of learning is taught effectively. Staff think carefully about how the planned learning activities will help children to develop their knowledge and understanding. However, they do not support children well enough or model how children should complete these activities. Too few children work through the planned learning activities successfully and in a way that supports them to know and understand more. Consequently, children have too few opportunities to apply or deepen their learning.

Leaders have continued to improve behaviour consistently and successfully. Parents, staff and pupils agree. There is a whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour that staff and pupils follow. As a result, there is a purposeful and orderly atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly. There have been no fixed-term exclusions this academic year. Breaktimes are happy and social occasions. The 'peer pals' take their roles seriously and support staff to make sure that everyone has a positive time. Leaders have introduced play equipment and activities, such as the scrap heap, that help to keep pupils active and entertained. As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, leaders have reintroduced school clubs, visits and events. Leaders have made positive progress towards enriching the curriculum and promoting pupils' wider cultural experiences and knowledge.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the trust has put a local governing body in place to provide governance to the school. Some governors are new. The trust is providing training to support governors to develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Although governance is being strengthened, governors need to develop a more structured and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation. This will enable governors to challenge and support leaders about the school's provision. In particular, governors need to assure themselves that the school's curriculum is ambitious and enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects.

Additional support

The trust has an accurate understanding of what is working well and what still needs to improve. The trust provides specific training and guidance for leaders, staff and governors which is improving systems and practice. For example, the trust has provided focused support from the associate leads for English, mathematics and early years. Middle leaders have received bespoke training on their roles and responsibilities. This is developing leadership capacity and strengthening the quality of education. Trust leaders check and report on the impact of leaders' actions. This confirms what has been achieved and clarifies the priorities for further improvement.

Leaders and teachers have received training in reading, including phonics, and English provided by a local English hub. Staff have also received mathematics training from the Ipswich Opportunity Area.

Evidence

Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, two associate leaders (one of whom is also the designated safeguarding leader), middle leaders, teachers, the SENCo and the school business manager. The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and the deputy director of education from the trust. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and observed pupils reading with staff. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their views of the school.

To check leaders' management of safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding leader. The lead inspector reviewed the single central record and records related to safeguarding incidents. The inspector considered the school's processes for reporting safeguarding concerns and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Both inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to check their views on safeguarding.

Inspectors also scrutinised the school's website, curriculum plans, teaching resources, the school's own evaluation, improvement plans and documents related to governance. The lead inspector looked at the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the 62 free-text responses, and reviewed the 43 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. An inspector spoke to a few parents at the beginning of the school day.