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Tracey Dunn
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dunn

Special measures monitoring inspection of Westwood-with-Iford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 April 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 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 July 2021. 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and the governors, and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 5 April 2022

Context

The school was hampered in its efforts to improve during the pandemic. This was particularly disruptive to leaders, including governors, who found monitoring difficult during the national restrictions. However, leaders are not using this as an excuse. They understand that wider failings have contributed to the school's decline following the findings of the previous inspection.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some key changes to staffing and personnel. These have mainly affected the senior leadership of the school. There have been three interim headteachers since July 2021. Those with responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have been replaced. There have been a few changes in governance.

During this visit, the lead inspector focused mainly on evaluating the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Governors have followed the directive academy order. There are plans to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) from July 2022.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders, including governors, have rightly prioritised safeguarding. They have responded quickly to the issues identified at the previous inspection. Staff and governors have benefited from relevant child protection training. They know the signs of neglect and abuse to which they should be alert. The new electronic system that has been introduced to record and refer any concerns, or escalate these, is clearly understood and well established. Staff understand that safeguarding is a matter of concern for all. Leaders make timely referrals to external services. They work with a range of professional partners to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders are tenacious. For example, they will challenge other professionals, if they feel that this is needed. Leaders ensure that the school's recruitment and employment checks are in line with current expectations. As a result, the school now has robust procedures and practices to keep pupils safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

The current interim headteacher has been working in the school since January 2022. She has quickly understood the needs of the school and has built purposefully on the work of her predecessor interim headteachers. Leaders, including governors, are realistic. They understand that there is still much to do to get the quality of education to where it needs to be. However, they are taking the right steps to build staff confidence and knowledge and are beginning to secure the necessary improvements.

Leaders' actions are timely and well planned. Along with an unrelenting focus on safeguarding, they have not wasted time in starting to address other issues, including

some weaknesses with the curriculum. For example, improving reading is a whole-school focus in the school's action plan. Leaders have just implemented a validated phonics programme so that staff can be fully trained to deliver early reading and phonics. However, this is altogether too recent and has not yet had any significant effect. Leaders are also focusing on mathematics to improve the curriculum design and eradicate weaknesses that come as a result of not having a coherent approach.

The work to identify, target and support pupils with SEND is still weak. This vital aspect of the school's work remains underdeveloped. Leaders recognise this and there have been some very recent changes to the leadership of SEND provision, including using an experienced special educational needs coordinator from a local partner primary school to re-energise and re-focus SEND provision in the school. However, it is still too recent to show any impact of this change.

Pupils say that they feel happy and safe. They know what bullying is and the different forms this can take, including online. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have confidence in adults and say that staff will act quickly to resolve any incidents, should these occur.

Recent changes to the behaviour management policy are working well. Pupils and staff understand the need for this and know why it is important. The shift to collective responsibility through established routines and clear expectations is improving pupils' behaviour. Pupils enjoy school. There is a purposeful and calm feel to the school day, including at breaktimes. However, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are not yet consistently good for all pupils across the school day.

Leaders support staff well. For example, teachers say that they feel listened to and that their workload is managed to enable them to do their job well. Staff report that leaders are approachable. Leaders are willing to do what they can to help staff in their day-to-day work. Staff appreciate this. There is a positive feel in the school, with staff, leaders and governors pulling in the same direction for the benefit of the pupils.

Additional support

Governors have worked closely with the local authority and two local MATs following the school's inspection in July 2021. This has led to interim appointments and other support, including relevant training and professional development, that have contributed to stabilising the school.

Evidence

As part of the focus on safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy, and scrutinised the single central record and examples of how the electronic system is used to report, record and escalate staff concerns. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding. The inspector also reviewed local authority visit notes and audit

information, and scrutinised governors' plans, evidence of monitoring visits and minutes of meetings.

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, a local authority officer, the chief executive officer of the proposed academy sponsor and representatives of the governing body. The inspector also met with a range of staff throughout the school day, including at breaktimes and through some lesson visits.