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Claire Bright
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Bright

Special measures monitoring inspection of Castle View Primary School

Following my visit with Claire Hollister, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 5 and 6 July 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 December 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 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:

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

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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 5 July 2022 and 6 July 2022

Context

Since the most recent section 5 inspection, there has been considerable staffing turbulence. Several staff have left, including at senior leadership level. The local authority appointed a seconded deputy headteacher to strengthen the school's senior leadership team. Some governors are new to their role. The chair of the governing body has been in post since September 2020, having previously served as a governor.

Leaders have held discussions with the local authority and the regional schools commissioner about the future of the school. Leaders anticipate that the school will join Cidari Multi-Academy Trust from September 2022. This will be the second proposed MAT sponsor.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Following the previous inspection, school leaders prioritised the actions needed to improve the school. Leaders have worked to curtail the disruption to pupils' learning due to the turbulence in staffing. This has been difficult as pupils' learning has also been interrupted by staff absence due to COVID-19. Despite this, most parents and carers are positive about the improvements made in the school.

Leaders have acted to ensure that the school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are beginning to benefit from this curriculum. In English and mathematics, the curriculum has been developed from early years to Year 6. Pupils, including children in the early years, are beginning to know and remember more in a range of subjects.

Leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve pupils' learning of phonics. Leaders are improving the profile of reading, creating an enjoyment for reading across the school. Staff are benefiting from appropriate training to deliver the phonics curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics is in place from the Reception class. Staff make sure that children's and pupils' reading books are matched to the sounds that they know. As a result, their phonics knowledge is improving.

Senior leaders are supporting subject leaders to develop their expertise. This support is helping subject leaders make suitable adaptations to curriculum plans. Senior leaders have also supported teachers to develop their curriculum knowledge. However, since receiving training, some subject leaders have left the school. This has hampered the impact of leaders' work to improve teachers' subject knowledge.

Teachers are making better use of assessment in some subjects to inform the delivery of the curriculum. In these subjects, teachers use assessment to inform and adapt the curriculum effectively. However, in other subjects, teachers' ability to check on what pupils know and remember is still developing. Sometimes, a few teachers are not clear on how to provide more challenge or support in pupils' learning. As a result, there are occasions

when pupils' learning does not build effectively on what they know and can do. This means that sometimes, pupils struggle to connect new learning to what they have learned before.

Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are receiving a better quality of education than at the previous inspection. The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) is working with subject leaders to help them support pupils with SEND in their learning. However, leaders are still in the process of identifying the needs of some pupils. As a result, some pupils are not accessing the support they need.

Most staff feel valued and supported. However, many staff are new to post and not all have benefited from a wide range of appropriate training and support. Leaders have not been able to provide staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver the curriculum in some subjects.

Pupils' aspirations about their future are improving. Leaders have strengthened the content of the personal, social and health education curriculum. This curriculum is organised in a logical way. Leaders are focused on developing pupils' knowledge about being healthy, developing friendships and career possibilities in a suitable way.

Leaders have improved the standard of pupils' behaviour. Staff have more consistent expectations of pupils. In turn, pupils are motivated to do well and are keen to receive the rewards on offer. Leaders have made sure that pupils, including children in early years, have established routines. Most classrooms are calm and provide a suitable environment for pupils to learn.

The pupils that inspectors spoke with reported that they feel safe in school. Leaders have improved the systems that they use to raise pupils' rates of attendance. Leaders' efforts have resulted in a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Governors have oversight of the work of school leaders. This allows them to provide a suitable level of challenge and support. Leaders ensure that governors are well informed. Governors have a strong view of the strengths of the school as well as those aspects that require further development.

Priorities for further improvement

- There has been a high turnover in staff, including at senior leadership level. This has affected the impact of leaders to implement the intended curriculum. Now that the staffing situation is more stable, leaders should deliver their plan to implement the intended curriculum in all subjects.

Additional support

Since the previous inspection, school leaders describe the actions of the proposed multi-academy trust sponsor as highly supportive. The local authority responded quickly by ensuring they appointed a deputy headteacher to provide leadership support. It also undertook a series of reviews, working with subject leaders to review the order of the curriculum.

Evidence

The inspectors observed leaders' work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and spoke with a representative of the local authority.