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Amy Blackburn
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Dear Mrs Blackburn

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Ormesby Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 17 January 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, including the CEO, the chair of the trust and governors, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also met with some curriculum leaders, spoke to pupils, listened to pupils read, reviewed documentation and visited lessons. I also checked the single central record and reviewed safeguarding records. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Ormesby Primary School remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership. The CEO made the strategic decision to act as interim headteacher during the period following the inspection. He was able to gain an accurate picture of the school and understood how to

begin making improvements. Since then, you have been appointed as headteacher and taken up post. An experienced senior leader from the trust has also been seconded as deputy headteacher. Leaders have rightly prioritised safeguarding and behaviour systems in the school. These key areas formed the main focus of my visit.

Following the previous inspection, you have ensured that a range of comprehensive staff training events have taken place in relation to safeguarding. During my visit, staff talked clearly about how to report any concerns and what signs they should be alert to. Staff understand what risks pupils might face in the community. I checked recent logs of actions taken by staff to keep pupils safe. These logs are detailed and thorough. The range of logs checked demonstrates that staff are now much more vigilant in reporting concerns. Leaders and staff ensure that any concerns are followed up promptly. New systems in place in school ensure that pupils who are more vulnerable are carefully monitored.

Pupils spoke very clearly about having trusted adults in school. They are confident that adults would help them and take their concerns seriously. They understand the importance of reporting any worries to adults. Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. However, older pupils say that poor behaviour by a few pupils still makes them feel uncomfortable. For example, there is sometimes misbehaviour in the toilets.

Leaders have taken swift action to improve behaviour. The behaviour policy has been simplified. Pupils and staff are positive about the new system with three clear rules: 'be safe, be respectful, be a learner'. Pupils are beginning to engage with these rules to help them manage their behaviour. Following incidents of poor behaviour, pupils are now encouraged to reflect on which rule they have not followed. Pupils are responding well to this increased focus on their behaviour choices. They are proud of the improvements they have made. The new rewards system has motivated pupils, and they enjoy the positive recognition. Behaviour around school is generally calm and orderly now. Leaders have introduced clear systems at lunchtime so that pupils can play football with staff on hand to help them to cooperate and manage their interactions.

Pupils' behaviour is improving. However, there are still a minority of pupils who do not behave as well as they should. These pupils continue to disrupt lessons. Leaders have plans underway to continue to develop their behaviour systems for the few pupils whose behaviour continues to be more challenging. Leaders are not currently analysing the data they have around behaviour to enable them to respond more strategically. As much of this work is in its infancy, it is too early to be able to judge the impact of some of these systems.

You are in the early stages of reviewing the curriculum across the school. The trust is beginning to provide support for some subject leaders. Initial steps have been taken with history and geography leaders, but this work is still in process. A new curriculum is being put in place for these subject areas, but it is too early to judge the impact of this focus. You rightly acknowledge that, having made some progress with behaviour and safeguarding systems, curriculum is your next key priority.

Work is also underway to improve phonics provision across school. All staff have had comprehensive refresher training in phonics, and leaders have had additional training to ensure their expertise. The new early reading lead is beginning to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery across the school. She has plans in place to begin coaching cycles with staff. Leaders are in the process of putting in place more efficient support for older pupils who find reading difficult.

The CEO and other trust leaders are regularly and closely involved with improvements taking place at Ormesby. The CEO is well positioned to be able to provide leaders with effective challenge and support. There are a number of vacancies on the governing body. The CEO is providing support to governors around how to hold school leaders to account effectively. This is an area that continues to develop. The school improvement plan is being used effectively as a working document. Since taking up role in January, you are now keen to move the improvement plan on to its next stage, providing more milestones and timescales.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Ironstone Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Katie Spurr
His Majesty's Inspector