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1 March 2023

Victoria Kirkman
Interim Co-Executive Headteacher
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Dear Miss Kirkman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Beckwithshaw Community Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 25 and 26 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 require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in December 2021.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and your interim co-executive headteacher, members of the interim executive board (IEB), and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I also met with leaders, both within the school and from across the federation, to discuss improvements made to the curriculum. I visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, discussed learning with pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the schools single central record. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

Beckwithshaw Community Primary School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

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

The school should take further action to:

- Continue to explore, with heightened purpose, plans for future long-term stability for leadership in the school. This is needed to ensure that current improvements can be sustained.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership, governance and staffing. The local authority has appointed an IEB to provide stable governance for the school. You were commissioned, by the local authority, in April 2022 as the joint interim co-executive headteacher and a second co-executive headteacher joined you in November 2022. Together, you work across a federation of three schools, which includes Beckwithshaw Community Primary School. A significant number of other staff in leadership roles, and at all levels in the school, are new to their posts.

Due to the significant changes in leadership, this inspection focused on leaders' plans to improve the curriculum in reading, history and personal development for pupils, as well as to the early years provision.

Since joining the school, you have taken swift and effective action to make improvements. You have a strong understanding of the benefits and challenges facing small schools. You have put clear, decisive plans in place, which set out ambitious and realistic targets for future improvement. One parent commented, 'It certainly feels that there is a more robust leadership team in place, underpinned by the IEB and the new headteachers.'

You have rightly prioritised the development of the curriculum and staff professional development. However, you are also acutely aware of the importance of supporting staff well-being and workload. This has ensured that staff are positive about changes that are being made. The atmosphere in the school is purposeful, happy and focused.

Your determination to swiftly put in place a curriculum for all subjects has ensured that teachers are now supported to plan for learning in mixed-age classes. However, the curriculum for many subject areas is still in the early stages of development. Subject leaders are still developing their understanding of how to improve and monitor pupils' learning or the work of others with precision. Further support is also needed to ensure that learning is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Improving pupils' reading remains a priority. You have ensured that staff receive regular training to implement the school's chosen approach to teaching phonics. They follow this with consistency. Staff quickly identify and give extra support to any pupils who may need help to keep up with learning. Resources are matched to pupils' phonics knowledge well. Leaders can identify where further improvements will impact on pupils' learning. They recognise that closer monitoring is needed to ensure that lessons are adapted effectively to meet all pupils needs.

You are clear that pupils at Beckwithshaw must be prepared for life beyond the school. With this in mind, you have supported leaders to strengthen and improve the school's curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education. However, leaders still need to ensure that learning is planned systematically and progressively over time.

Much has been done to improve the early years provision in the school. You have worked with staff and with local authority support to create an environment that is warm, caring and welcoming. Staff recognise the importance of developing children's communication skills. They support children to use newly taught vocabulary well. However, it is not always clear what the intended learning is across the classroom, both indoors and outdoors. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently engaged and interested with learning. Leaders know that this is an area that needs more development in the future.

You have put a carefully planned programme of professional development in place for all staff. You utilise expertise from within the federation of schools and also from external sources effectively. As many staff are very new to the school, this external support is vital. Experienced practitioners from beyond the federation are enabling leaders within the school to develop confidence and expertise. Staff are enthusiastic and excited about their future ideas to support pupils' learning. Your passion and ambition to identify and support new leaders is balanced with a determination that their ideas for further improvement must be both effective and sustainable for the future.

The IEB is very clear about their desire to bring about future stability in leadership. They know the school well and provide both challenge to leaders, and scrutiny of improvement plans. They are working closely with the local authority to identify how recent improvements can be sustained in the future. As a sponsoring academy trust has not been identified it is vital that ways to ensure long-term stability in leadership are identified and pursued with urgency.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Batley
His Majesty's Inspector