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Wendy Gordon
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Dear Mrs Gordon

Special measures monitoring inspection of Green Oaks Primary Academy

Following my visit with Fiona Riley, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 12–13 June 2018, 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 November 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint one newly qualified teacher.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2016.

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards of attainment, particularly for boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills in reasoning and solving problems in mathematics
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to build upon and apply their skills in phonics to support their development in reading and writing
 - pupils have access to stimulating resources to help them develop a love of books and reading
 - all teachers understand and use information about pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that work is at the right level
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can achieve and provide them with a stimulating learning environment in which to learn and work that is suitably challenging
 - lower-ability pupils are set tasks that they can attempt for themselves and that deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - ensuring that their attendance improves including that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - making sure that more boys reach a good level of development by the end of the early years.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management and the capacity of leaders to improve pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that the school's system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress is clear, understood by all, and used to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - making sure that leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that senior and middle leaders are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and providing training and support to teachers so that they develop the skills and knowledge to become effective
 - defining and implementing a strategic approach to the promotion of fundamental British values and the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils.

An external review of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 12–13 June 2018

Evidence

The lead inspector met with the principal, deputy principal, senior leaders, teachers, and two representatives from the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. The inspectors spoke with parents and carers before school and with pupils formally and informally in classes and at social times. The inspectors visited all classes and examined a wide range of pupils' workbooks. The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read. A range of documents were scrutinised, including those relating to pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Context

The 'Designated Specialist Provision' (DSP) that was part of Green Oaks Primary Academy left the school in January 2018. The DSP is now a separate school in its own right. The current deputy principal is absent from work until January 2019 when she will return to the school in a new role. The acting deputy principal was appointed in January 2018 and has taken on the subject leadership role for mathematics. The leader responsible for the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities left the school at Easter 2018. Temporary arrangements are in place to cover this absence. The school continues to experience rates of pupil mobility that are much higher than national averages.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal and senior leaders have continued to drive forward improvements at a rapid pace. The school's statement of action contains precise actions, timescales and monitoring opportunities. Consequently, leaders have an accurate view of which school improvement actions have been completed, their impact, and which actions require more time. The trust's education adviser can therefore monitor this progress carefully and hold leaders fully to account for the actions they take. Leaders have also reacted swiftly to weaker areas identified at the previous monitoring visit. For example, pupils now have a much better understanding of British values and more pupils' reading books in key stage 1 are at the appropriate level of challenge.

The principal has ensured that teachers are accurately assessing and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This frequent assessment informs teachers' planning and helps them to plan carefully for pupils' next steps in learning. The principal frequently checks the accuracy of teachers' assessment by cross-referencing it with pupils' books. Teachers produce comprehensive 'pupil progress review' documents. These documents show individual pupils and the progress they have made from their various starting points. Teachers then compose a mini 'action plan' for their class. These plans identify any pupils who may be falling behind so that they can receive extra support to help them catch up.

Teachers work with colleagues from other year groups and schools in order to discuss this information and share good practice. They also frequently moderate pupils' work with colleagues from other schools to ensure that the judgements they are making regarding pupils' attainment and progress are accurate and secure. As a result, the school's assessment system is effective in helping to ensure that the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The principal has ensured that the existing practice to support disadvantaged pupils, through the pupil premium funding, has improved. For example, 'pupil voice' sessions enable disadvantaged pupils to have a one-to-one conversation with the class teacher to discuss which aspects of their learning are successful and to set targets for other aspects that may require extra support. For example, several disadvantaged pupils told their teachers they would like extra time to solve problem-solving questions in mathematics. Assessment information provided by the school and inspection evidence show that while the disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in Year 5, they are making slower progress in the other year groups. The principal acknowledges that this needs to improve quickly.

School leaders follow the school's 'monitoring calendar' in order to check on, for example, the quality of teaching and learning. A recent example of this work was the checking of pupils' theme books to ensure that the taught curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders responsible for pupils' progress in English and mathematics have supported colleagues with, for example, the consistent use of the school's marking and feedback policy and the planning of writing to help engage the boys. Leaders have observed teachers and provided them with coaching and feedback sessions to help improve their practice. Finally, leaders have received appropriate training from the trust in order to keep them up to date with the latest developments in pupil safeguarding requirements and how to hold challenging conversations. School leaders are therefore becoming increasingly effective in checking various aspects of the school and developing the practice of colleagues.

The newly appointed leader responsible for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been effective in raising the profile of this area throughout the school. For example, recent whole-school events celebrating world music and cultures have provided opportunities for pupils to learn about countries different to their own. Various assemblies have deepened pupils' understanding of British values, iconic British buildings and famous British people. Pupils from Year 4 are making links in the local community by visiting a residential home to sing, talk and read. This aspect of the school's work is ensuring that pupils are becoming better prepared for life in modern Britain.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers have ensured that pupils have continued to receive frequent opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. This work has been enhanced with problem-solving activities published in fortnightly school newsletters.

These activities have successfully encouraged families to try to solve problems together at home with successes celebrated in assemblies. Recent examples include 'Do all regular shapes have parallel lines?' and 'Is it true that the larger the box, the more it weighs?' Pupils told inspectors they enjoyed these problem-solving challenges and liked justifying to adults and each other how they had arrived at a particular answer.

Teachers are providing opportunities for pupils to build upon and apply their phonics skills in reading and writing. Numerous displays and corridor areas around the school contain signs such as 'Have you lined up sensibly?' Adults then encourage pupils to read these aloud when waiting for lunch or going into assembly. There is a before- and after-school phonics club for those pupils who require extra support to attend. Current assessment information provided by the school suggests that the proportion of pupils on track to achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check will be considerably higher than in 2017. While the majority of phonics lessons are engaging and fun for pupils, there are occasions where a few pupils become bored and disengaged. This is because the lessons are not as engaging as they could be.

Pupils have access to a wide range of books in a well-stocked library. Pupils read frequently and told inspectors that they enjoyed the activity. Pupils are rewarded by being allowed extra time in the library to read, in addition to their timetabled class time. The 'reading heroes' display encourages pupils to read a wide variety of different texts, including poems such as haikus, cinquains, limericks and kennings. Recent 'words of the day' to help widen pupils' vocabulary include camouflage, lavish, mammoth, bombarded and furore. A recent World Book Day had a focus on David Walliams. Pupils were encouraged to read text from his books, discuss plots and characters and write a biography. This work is effective in encouraging pupils to have a love of books and reading.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able pupils, can achieve. For example, work on display in classrooms and corridors is of an age-appropriate high standard. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to produce work to match these high standards. An inspector observed pupils in Year 3 improve their writing through choosing high-quality vocabulary. They had written 'In the distance the translucent, spooky ghost was waiting.' A pupil in Year 2 told an inspector they had to use adjectives and alliteration in their writing. They had written, 'The salty, sandy sea was splishing and splashing everywhere.'

Teachers are ensuring that teaching assistants are deployed more effectively than has previously been the case. Inspectors observed the teaching assistants working with pupils of all abilities, in a wide range of contexts. This approach is helping to ensure that lower-ability pupils attempt tasks for themselves, therefore improving their confidence.

The early years leader and Reception teacher have ensured that boys are now

catered for more effectively. For example, recent stories and opportunities to write have focused on castles, pirates and 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. 'Inspirational Man Week' encouraged the children to find out about Neil Armstrong and Barack Obama. One boy had written, 'Neil put a flag on the moon.' A visit by the police in a van had encouraged another boy to write, 'We got to go in the police van and we had a photo.' As a result, boys' attainment in writing and mathematics has improved from the previous years. The early years leader and Reception teacher are aware that, currently, progress in reading is not as strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The principal is taking a firm stance regarding pupils' rates of absence and persistent absence. An effective system is in place to encourage parents, whose child's attendance is causing concern, to send their child to school more frequently. The local authority has recently issued a number of fines for either the taking of holidays during term time or poor attendance over a period of time. Latest attendance figures provided by the school indicate that absence and persistent absence rates are broadly in line with national averages. This is a significant improvement from recent years.

The school has a busy and purposeful atmosphere where pupils are engaged in their work. Instances of poor behaviour and bullying are extremely rare. Pupils told inspectors they felt happy and safe.

Outcomes for pupils

There have not been any end of key stage tests, early years or Year 1 phonics results to report on since the previous monitoring inspection. However, inspection evidence and assessment information provided by the school suggest that a higher proportion of pupils are working at age-related expectations and making good rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics than at this time last year.

External support

The Greenwood Dale Trust is providing effective support for school leaders and staff. The education adviser is helping to confirm leaders' judgements regarding, for example, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' attainment and progress. Staff told inspectors they value the opportunities provided by the trust to develop professionally.