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Mr Andrew Midgley
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mr Midgley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Carlinghow Princess Royal Junior Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 18 December 2019, 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 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 2018.

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

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school's short-term (seven week) action plan, written by the trust, is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified 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 Kirklees. This letter will be

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2018.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all groups of pupils, including middle-ability pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to achieve well by ensuring that:
 - staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - assessment information is used skilfully to plan work that matches pupils' needs and abilities and challenges them to make good progress
 - teachers guide pupils appropriately to take on challenging tasks that match their needs and abilities
 - skilful questioning engages pupils well and deepens their understanding of what is being learned
 - greater opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and write at length across a wide range of subjects
 - pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are accurately assessed to promote learning and good writing skills
 - pupils' understanding of what they are reading is checked regularly to strengthen comprehension
 - the work of teaching assistants is managed well and checked thoroughly.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - adults manage pupils' behaviour consistently well to promote good attitudes to learning
 - pupils take pride in their work, present it well and take time to make it better
 - there is a rapid and sustainable reduction in absenteeism and exclusions for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the provision in early years by:
 - providing greater opportunities for children to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in the outdoor area
 - ensuring that challenging work is set and leads to most children making good progress.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership at all levels, including governance, by making sure that:
 - effective plans for improvement are developed, with sharply focused actions and precise measures for success linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching

- senior and middle leaders take swift and timely action to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are good
- senior leaders provide sufficient advice and support for middle leaders to be successful in raising standards across all subjects
- professional development and external advice are used successfully to ensure that teaching, leadership and pupils' progress are good
- the curriculum is well taught across a wide range of subjects and includes good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual understanding
- teachers are sufficiently skilled to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have their needs identified and met so that they make good progress
- reading is successfully promoted both in school and at home to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education
- swift action is taken to resolve incidents of bullying
- governors hold leaders to account for their actions, including the effective use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 17 December 2019 to 18 December 2019

Evidence

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, in your role as the interim headteacher, senior leaders and staff. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work, jointly with senior leaders. I also met with a representative of the local authority and with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to parents, carers and pupils. I observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Context

The substantive headteacher has been absent from the school since September 2019. You took up post a week before my monitoring visit. Of the three learning mentors employed at the time of the last inspection, two are no longer working in school and have not been replaced. At the time of my visit, three classes were being taught by temporary teachers. With these exceptions, the staff team remains largely unchanged since the last inspection. The Greetland Academy Trust (the trust) is the proposed sponsor for the school. However, a firm date for the school's conversion to the trust is not in place.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

Quality of education

Leaders were asked to improve several crucial aspects of teaching at the last inspection. These included raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve through better use of assessment information. The previous inspection also found that teachers' questioning was often ineffective and the work they set needed to be more demanding. Leaders have arranged some training and coaching for teaching staff. However, this has not been intensive enough to secure the rapid improvements needed in teaching. Additionally, leaders do not check thoroughly and frequently enough on the quality of education pupils receive. Hence, they do not know whether training has made a difference to the effectiveness of teaching.

The last inspection also highlighted that pupils' basic English skills needed to improve. However, pupils' written work seen during this inspection often showed that their weak spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation skills remain. Teachers have started to give pupils opportunities to edit their written work. However, this does not consistently result in pupils producing a more successful piece of writing.

The work of teaching assistants was identified as an area to improve at the last inspection. Some teaching assistants make a positive difference to the pupils they

support. However, far too often, teaching assistants make no contribution to pupils' learning. Some sit at the back of lessons, away from the pupils, watching the teacher. Leaders are not able to say how they have worked on addressing this issue.

In the early years, leaders were asked at the last inspection to improve the outdoor learning environment by providing effective opportunities for children to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills. They were also asked to ensure that the activities on offer are more demanding. However, improvements have not been secured and these aspects remain priorities. Leaders view that progress in this area has been hampered by their own conflicting views on how children should learn in the early years. Additionally, this term the Nursery class has had 10 different teachers, which has contributed to this lack of progress.

Behaviour and attitudes

Leaders were asked at the last inspection to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance rates. However, they have not been successful in doing so. Attendance rates for pupils overall are low and are not showing sustained improvement. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance rates remain even lower than others. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent is high. Disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately represented within this group. Leaders have not prioritised this area sufficiently by making it a whole-school focus. They have not ensured that staff with responsibility for attendance have enough time to improve it.

Leaders were also asked to reduce the rates of exclusion of disadvantaged pupils from school. However, exclusion rates remain high, including for disadvantaged pupils. Several pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour, many of whom are disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They often have adult support in lessons to prevent outbursts or poor behaviour. However, there is very little in place to support the social and emotional needs of these pupils. Therefore, there is no sustained change to their behaviour patterns.

Leaders have recently revised the school's behaviour policy with the aim of encouraging pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Both pupils and staff have welcomed this change. Pupils told me that the 'stepped' sanctions make them think more carefully about following the school rules. Pupils also appreciate the recently introduced rewards they can gain through the new house point system. However, pupils sometimes disrupt the learning of others and this is not stopped by the adults. There is work to do to train staff in dealing with poor behaviour effectively. The trust has arranged this training for next term.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the last inspection, leaders, including governors, have not secured necessary improvements. The areas for improvement identified previously remain priorities,

and any gains are very limited. As a result, pupils receive a poor offer from the school. The root cause of this is leaders' failure to check thoroughly on the effectiveness of the school's performance.

Senior and subject leaders have introduced new approaches and initiatives aimed at improving English and mathematics teaching. For a limited period, they checked whether staff were following the new systems. However, this was not sustained. Leaders have not ensured that teachers have appropriate subject knowledge for the subjects they teach. Ultimately, leaders have not checked whether their actions have made any difference to pupils' learning. This means that weak teaching often goes undetected and persists.

Senior leaders have not worked strategically to address the areas for improvement. Since the last inspection, improvement plans have not been focused consistently on the right priorities. Similarly, plans are not aimed precisely at improving pupils' outcomes. Due to this, leaders often evaluate that they have been successful without considering whether they have made a difference to the pupils' quality of education. Trust leaders have recently created a short-term, seven-week plan. This does focus on the identified priorities. It would benefit from some measurable targets or milestones so that leaders can check whether they have been effective.

Governors were also asked to improve their effectiveness at the last inspection. They have accessed very little training since that time. Leaders have not provided full and accurate information to governors. Governors have not challenged this effectively and have not held leaders to account for the school's performance. This has contributed to the lack of improvement which is evident.

Leadership of the provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND needs urgent improvement. The curriculum is not well designed for pupils with SEND. Their individual targets, including those found in education, health and care (EHC) plans, are often vague and are not matched to pupils' needs. Targets are often in place for long periods because pupils' progress towards them is very limited. Leaders have not evaluated last year's work to support disadvantaged pupils. They have not planned how they will spend this year's funding, even though a third of the year has passed. Although leaders often know pupils very well, they have not identified pupils' barriers to learning accurately.

Leaders have not maintained the effective safeguarding which was in place at the last inspection. A recent review by the local authority has exposed a range of weaknesses. Although teachers have been trained in safeguarding, other staff have not. This means they are not aware of the dangers pupils may face or the signs to watch out for. Records of physical restraints of pupils show that parents are often not informed when their child has been held by adults.

Of the pupils who spoke to me during the inspection, many said that they did not always feel safe in the school. Some pupils reported that they see pupils being

bullied. Although this is reported to adults, pupils say it does not make it stop. Other pupils felt unsafe because of other pupils' behaviour, including the fights they say happen at playtimes and lunchtimes. Leaders have recently improved playtimes by halving the number of pupils playing at one time.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The proposed sponsor is now working with the school prior to it joining the trust, including providing an interim headteacher. The trust has plans in place to tackle the priorities for improvement and are ready to deploy a range of specialists to support leaders and teachers in the school.
- Following their review of safeguarding, the local authority has instructed leaders to take action and are monitoring this aspect of the school's work.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leadership capacity in the school is currently weak. Subject leaders have not been well supported to secure sustained improvements. Senior leaders do not consistently focus on the right areas for improvement. Leaders do not habitually and thoroughly check whether their work has made any difference to pupils.
- A lack of strategic working over time means that leaders' time is often spent reacting to issues arising in school, including pupils' poor behaviour.
- Leaders have not been held to account for their poor performance by governors or by the local authority. Consequently, weak teaching is still evident in some year groups.

External support

The local authority has secured an interim headteacher who is employed by The Greetland Academy. During the last academic year, the school brought in support from the local authority. This improved leadership capacity for a short time. However, this slight improvement has not been sustained. This term, until recently, the support in place from the local authority has not been sufficient. The school is heavily dependent on external support, which is now in place through the proposed sponsor. The Greetland Academy have suitable plans in place involving the deployment of specialist leaders to secure improvements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders should act urgently to ensure that safeguarding is effective in the school, including (but not restricted to) ensuring:
 - all those working at the school have suitable safeguarding training
 - systems and procedures are in place to minimise risks to pupils.