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19 December 2024

Melanie Garlick
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Dear Mrs Garlick

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oak CofE Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 3 December 2024, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in October 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, other staff, members of the interim executive board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority 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 discussed further improvements to the curriculum with relevant leaders, visited lessons, discussed learning and school life with pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's single central record. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

The school may appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since my previous monitoring visit, you and your team have continued to focus relentlessly on improving the quality of education it provides. The school's shared vision, to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, is being increasingly realised. The distributed leadership structure is embedded well. School leaders fully understand and embrace their roles with rigour. There is ambition and determination to ensure that pupils receive an effective education, as well as purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop personally and socially.

The changes made to reading, writing and mathematics are now well established. Learning in all subjects progresses from Nursery through to Year 6. Teachers use the curriculum information provided, in all core subjects, consistently to design lessons, which help pupils to learn more over time. While this has had a positive impact on pupils' progress through the curriculum, the outcomes for some pupils are still not high enough. This is, in part, due to the legacy of the previous, poorly constructed curriculum. The school recognises that gaps in pupil's knowledge must be addressed with urgency to support all pupils to achieve as well as they should.

Subject leadership across the curriculum has improved substantially since my last visit. All leaders are now developing their subject areas with confidence. They ensure that the schemes of work are used consistently to help pupils to build their knowledge across the curriculum. This is supporting pupils to remember more about the subjects they study. The school is now identifying how, in many subjects, it can develop the schemes further to better suit the context of the school. It is also focusing on developing staff expertise, both with subject knowledge and in the implementation of the curriculum. The school uses expertise provided from the local authority and the proposed academy trust sponsors well, to build staff expertise. This is having a positive impact on the approaches that teachers use in the classrooms. They are growing in confidence to design activities to support pupils to learn effectively. Teachers understand and use the school's systems to check what pupils know and remember consistently. They check learning and adapt activities effectively, to meet pupils' academic needs.

The improvements made to the teaching of phonics are embedded. The school's chosen phonics approach is used consistently. The impact of this is seen in pupils' achievement in the phonic screening check. The improvements made to the curriculum for reading and writing are also beginning to show impact. However, pupils' outcomes are not yet in line with national expectations. Teachers use the progressive steps identified in the curriculum to design learning, which helps pupils make progress over time. Storytelling opportunities are plentiful and varied through the school day. Older pupils 'buddy read' with younger pupils. There is an enthusiasm about books and reading across the school. Positive improvements can also be seen with the curriculum for mathematics. Newly introduced systems are now understood. The school recognises that while pupils are making significant progress in the curriculum in all year groups, there is still more to do to ensure that gaps in their learning are swiftly identified and addressed.

The school's work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is notable. The ambition to provide inclusive education for all pupils is being realised. The complex, communication and interaction (CCI) room is well developed. Pupils with the most complex needs work on personalised learning timetables while based in the CCI room. When they are ready, they move between the CCI room and their main classrooms. Teachers are supported well to adapt learning to help pupils succeed.

At the last monitoring visit, some pupils and staff highlighted concerns about behaviour being disruptive and, at times, inappropriate. The school's work to address this is swift and is having a positive effect. Policies and systems have been revisited to ensure that everyone is clear about how any behaviour incidents will be managed. All staff have received training to use the school's chosen restorative practice approach. This is checked closely to ensure that it is followed consistently. Pupils are supported to understand the importance of talking to staff about any worries or concerns they may have. Most pupils say they now report any issues quickly. They are confident that they will be listened to and their concerns will be acted upon. While some pupils still struggle to regulate their behaviour, the school is focused on supporting them through the chosen positive approaches. These approaches are having impact and the use of suspension is falling.

The school's work around attendance remains a priority. Systems are used well and, although a small number of pupils still do not attend school regularly enough, the relentless focus on attendance is making a positive difference.

Although the academy conversion has been delayed due to external factors, this is not limiting the school's focus on improving the quality of education for pupils. The school has grown in strength of purpose and is now sharing the positive practices they have developed in early years and SEND with other schools. Staff state that workload can be high at times. However, they feel valued and well supported by the school to manage this effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrea Batley
His Majesty's Inspector