

16 July 2024

Melanie Garlick
Headteacher
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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 18 and 19 June 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 second 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 overall effectiveness, 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, Victoria Oddy, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you, your deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the interim executive board (IEB) and representatives 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. We also met with other school leaders to discuss further improvements to the curriculum. We visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, discussed learning and school life with pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's 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 be no longer 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 last monitoring visit, you have continued to focus on developing your leadership team further. There is a focus on improving the school through distributed leadership. All senior leaders have a secure understanding of their roles and areas of responsibility. New members have joined the IEB to add to their expertise, in areas such as developing the early years provision.

Some of the improvements you had started to make are now becoming embedded. The school's focus on ensuring that reading, writing and mathematics are taught consistently and progressively has continued. You report that this is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Likewise, the development of the early years curriculum has been a focus and there is evidence of this having a positive impact on the youngest children in the school.

The implementation of early reading and phonics programmes is now secure. Leaders are now continuing to focus on developing the curriculum for reading and writing across key stages 1 and 2. They have identified progressive, small steps in learning for all year groups. These are being used to support teachers to plan lessons that build on prior learning. Leaders are confident that the changes are leading to improving outcomes for pupils. The mathematics curriculum is also now further embedded. However, leaders know that, in some areas, such as the use of mathematical resources or planning for learning in the early years, there is still more to do.

The work on developing the foundation curriculum subjects has also continued. Subject leaders are growing in confidence. The school's focus on developing subject experts is starting to pay off. This is due to the training and support they are receiving from leaders and external advisers. There is greater understanding of the commercial schemes, purchased to ensure that there is coverage of all national curriculum content. The implementation of the curriculum in classrooms is now monitored by subject leaders. This monitoring is supporting the school to identify where the curriculum needs to develop further, or where staff need further training to implement it as intended.

Leaders are continuing to seek ways to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to catch up with the learning they have missed, due to the previous poor curriculum. However, there are still many pupils who have significant gaps in their learning or do not remember the subject-specific knowledge that leaders expect. This is reflected in pupils' weak outcomes. For some subjects, the school is still identifying how the timetable and lessons should be structured to best support pupils to remember important learning. Assessment systems are also at different stages of development. Leaders know further improvements are needed to ascertain the impact of the new curriculum on pupils' learning.

The school experiences high pupil mobility. This has led to higher numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) joining the school mid-year. Leaders

have been proactive in ensuring that they meet these pupils' needs effectively, both within the main classrooms and through the introduction of the complex, communication and interaction (CCI) room. Classroom teachers are showing a greater understanding of how to adapt learning to best support pupils. This is due to the support they have from senior leaders and external professional development opportunities. Leaders and staff in the CCI room are working closely with local authority support to further develop the provision. Several of the children in the CCI room currently attend school part time. Leaders are determined to extend these timetables and provide opportunities for pupils to be fully included in the mainstream setting when they are ready and able to.

On the first monitoring visit, changes had been made to policies around behaviour management. The school was found to be increasingly calm and orderly. Senior leaders continue to be determined to embed new systems and approaches, which focus on individual pupils' needs and put restorative practice at the heart of how inappropriate behaviours are managed. However, during this visit, it became apparent that this practice is not fully understood by several staff members or by pupils. While little low-level disturbance was seen, all pupils spoken to said that behaviour is, at times, disruptive and often inappropriate. There are still high incidences of suspensions for inappropriate behaviour, although this has improved from last year. Pupils often do not tell staff when issues arise. They see this as 'snitching'. Peer pressure from older pupils is consolidating this belief and some pupils do not believe that the restorative approach, based around reflection, is having a positive impact. When staff do address behavioural concerns, some staff and pupils do not see the value of the approaches used. This is because some staff do not understand the rationale behind the behaviour policy. There is a lack of clarity in the policy. Practice is, therefore, not consistent across school. Leaders know that this must be addressed with some urgency.

Improving attendance remains a high priority for the school. Systems introduced are used robustly and are beginning to impact positively for some pupils. However, there is still work to be done in this area.

The school's work to develop a secure safeguarding culture is well embedded. Procedures continue to be effective. Everyone has a strong understanding of why safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The IEB continues to seek ways to provide long-term stability for the school, through its work with the local authority and the proposed academy trust sponsors. The quality of education committee is committed to quality assure and further improve the curriculum. The school makes good use of the external support the board offers. The school identifies and utilises effectively IEB expertise to support it on its journey to becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board 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