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Ms Izzy Mair
Wayland Junior Academy Watton
Brandon Road
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Dear Ms Mair

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Wayland Junior Academy
Watton**

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 November 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 recent 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 2019.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tessa Holledge
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2019

- Urgently eradicate the inadequacies in governance by ensuring that the trust and the LGB:
 - establish consistent leadership capability and capacity at all levels to support the work of the new interim headteacher in sustainably raising standards
 - challenge leaders about the quality of the school's work
 - hold leaders to account for pupils' progress and attainment across the school
 - check that additional funding is being used effectively to improve provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND in all year groups
 - increase and improve oversight of the provision in the school's specialist resource base.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment thoroughly to check that teaching meets the needs and abilities of pupils so that they make good progress and attain well
 - ensuring that leaders have a secure understanding about what assessment information tells them, so that they can act swiftly to support pupils who are not fulfilling their potential
 - developing the curriculum, in both the core and wider curriculum subjects, so that it is well planned, builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, meets the needs and interests of pupils and enables them to achieve well
 - analysing behaviour and bullying incidents to detect trends, and taking action to reduce poor behaviour.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and set work which enables them to make swift progress
 - teachers use assessment information to set high expectations for what pupils can and should be achieving
 - teachers plan learning over time that enables pupils to develop their skills and knowledge and apply these to their wider learning, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 27 to 28 November 2019

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and met with the principal, senior leaders, members of staff, groups of pupils and the chair of the interim executive board (IEB). The inspector spoke with parents on the playground and also observed playtimes. Lessons were visited alongside senior leaders and scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken. The inspector visited the specialist resource base. Documents presented by the school were examined.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the interim principal has been appointed to the substantive role. There have been several changes to the senior leadership team – the deputy principal is currently on secondment to another school two days a week; a curriculum/English leader has been appointed and a mathematics leader. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is also part of this team.

The local governing body has been dissolved and replaced with an IEB. This is a small body of education professionals. The IEB is chaired by the acting chief executive officer of the Norfolk Academies Trust, which the school is currently part of.

The regional schools commissioner has identified a potential multi-academy trust (MAT) to take on the school through a rebrokering process. Due diligence is currently underway, and the school is likely to transfer in February 2020.

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

The priority for school leaders since the start of this school year has been to improve behaviour. They have introduced a new behaviour policy, which focuses on praising good behaviour. Staff have received extensive training and share leaders' belief that this policy is the right one. Pupils are also positive about the changes. They like the approach to 'praise in public' but 'reprimand in private'. Every day pupils are welcomed, if they wish, by their teachers with a handshake and positive greeting. Pupils like this.

In lessons, most pupils focus on their learning. They get on with their work. However, a significant minority of pupils are still presenting extremely challenging behaviour, disrupting learning and presenting a danger to themselves and adults who take them out of class. Some take themselves out of learning, which takes support away from other pupils and disrupts their own education. Leaders are not afraid to take decisive action where this is the case; consequently, the number of

fixed-term exclusions has risen. There are plans to provide alternative education for some of these pupils, but this is not yet in place.

Leaders have improved playground and lunchtime behaviour. New systems for lining up are used consistently by all staff and mean that pupils arrive quietly and calmly to lessons. A new system for lunchtimes had been introduced in the week of inspection and appeared initially effective in reducing numbers of pupils on the playground at any one time. It also encouraged pupils to take time to eat their lunch and talk to friends rather than rushing.

Pupils enjoy their playtimes. They like the amount of toys and equipment available to use. Year 6 prefects keep things organised. There are some areas that are not as well supervised as others at these times. Leaders need to ensure that there are not areas inside or outside the buildings where pupils are unsupervised. Behaviour in toilet areas is not always good enough. Pupils told me that there are some toilet blocks that they do not like to use due to pupils misusing the facilities. This adds to the general disrepair of the school site.

To improve the quality of education, the principal has made use of an external consultant and a teaching/learning adviser from within the MAT. The external consultant has worked with a number of teachers on their planning and teaching. The mathematics and English leaders have shared good practice with colleagues through staff meetings and acted as a source of advice. However, due to the amount of time spent dealing with challenging behaviour, senior staff have not had as much of an impact on teaching and learning as they would like to have done.

There have been changes in teachers in several classes and some teaching posts are still filled on a supply basis. It is clear that those who are permanently employed are keen to improve their practice. They have obviously listened to the curriculum training that has been provided and added this to classroom activities. However, more is needed to make sure that strategies are fully understood by all staff.

The teaching of mathematics is the stronger subject across the school, representing a change since the section 5 inspection. Teachers use the school's chosen scheme consistently. They have started to use apparatus, such as number cubes, to support pupils' learning. The mathematics leader has introduced the use of online games and challenges to help pupils develop their mental agility and fluency with number. Classes end each day with a 'maths meeting'. The mathematics leader recognises that there is more to do to make this the active, engaging session that she intends it to be.

In teaching writing, teachers have been encouraged to teach a sequence. This consists of starting with looking at a text, identifying features, building up grammar related to the chosen genre, planning their own version, writing and editing. Teachers are attempting to use this, but do not yet have the subject confidence to make this effective. The texts chosen are not always appropriate. Planning sheets

change format frequently, which is confusing for pupils. Leaders have chosen to use success criteria. These also change format and are not always used effectively. Learning objectives are also expected, but these are often vague and provide no focus to a piece of work.

Leaders have put in place a clear curriculum plan for subjects other than English and mathematics. This sets out what skills need developing in each year group. Leaders have blocked units of work into weeks to enable pupils to focus on a subject for an extended period of time. They know there is work to be done in making it clear what pupils should know and remember, from each year group and from unit to unit, in terms of knowledge and vocabulary. Teaching does not, however, always engage pupils effectively. Resources used are not always appropriate or sufficient for pupils to learn well.

The school's specialist resource base (SRB) for up to eight pupils with cognition and learning needs is still based at the local secondary school (also part of the current MAT). The curriculum is focused on early reading, writing and mathematics, with a range of other activities learning about topics, for example Africa. A curriculum intention has been written, but the overall plan to ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum beyond mathematics and English is not yet in place.

The location of the SRB is still not appropriate. The classroom is bright and airy, but there are very limited age-appropriate play facilities outside. Many of the pupils accessing this SRB have poor self-esteem and low confidence. They do not have opportunities to mix with enough other pupils their age and/or take part in activities beyond the classroom that would enhance their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The single-minded determination of the principal to get things right for these pupils is driving school improvement. She has brought the staff team closer together, improving communication and making decisions with them, where appropriate, to ensure that change is a collaborative process. However, she has not been afraid to take difficult decisions, for example regarding staffing, where needed.

The action plan is fit for purpose and being followed but is at a very early stage of implementation. The IEB is monitoring progress against this action plan at each of their meetings. A pupil premium review has been undertaken. Proposed actions to use the pupil premium effectively are planned but not yet in place.

Where senior leaders and consultants have had the opportunity to work with teachers, improvements in practice have been seen. However, these improvements are limited at the moment and far more needs to be done to raise the quality of education.

The SENCo is now further established in post than at the July inspection. She has made sure that all teachers understand the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in their classes. She has made sure that teachers can access specialist support for further advice. Working with other leaders, she has revised the format of documents mapping support. There is an emphasis on making sure that the teaching in the classrooms is of quality and provides support instead of always taking pupils out for interventions.

Safeguarding remains effective. Staff receive regular training and additional top-ups where needed on specific issues. They are clear about what to do if they have a concern. Parents spoken to felt that their children were well cared for. Senior staff are establishing close links with parents, especially those who have additional needs or challenging behaviour.

There is an inclusive culture. Staff and pupils welcome each other to school and new starters make friends. Leaders plan appropriate support to ensure that they successfully include pupils with emotional and behavioural needs as well as those pupils with SEND. For example, some pupils have part-time timetables until alternatives placements are finalised.

A recent change is the introduction of an electronic recording system for logging safeguarding and behaviour issues. This needs embedding in terms of staff confidence in how to record that actions have been taken, recording in a timely fashion and ensuring that all who need to know about an issue do so.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The senior leadership team, led by the principal, are keen to see rapid change. They know what is working and what still needs to improve. They have correctly focused on addressing a few key areas at a time rather than attempting to change everything immediately and risking losing staff engagement in that process.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- There is a lack of capacity in terms of senior staff to improve teaching and learning. This is due to the limited number of days that senior staff are able to be out of their own classes to work with others and the high demands of dealing with poor behaviour.
- A significant number of the current Year 3 pupils did not pass the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2. Although there has been a training session for staff, there is not currently any specific phonics teaching in place for these pupils.