

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 November 2018

Mr Sash Hamidi
Interim executive headteacher
Welldon Park Primary School
Kingsley Road
South Harrow
Harrow
Middlesex
HA2 8LT

Dear Mr Hamidi

Special measures monitoring inspection of Welldon Park Primary School

Following my visit with Jane Moon, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Angela Tempany, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 17 October 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 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 March 2018.

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

The school's action plan 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 Harrow. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that:
 - leaders responsible for safeguarding have the necessary skills to fulfil their roles
 - all staff have a robust understanding of how to keep pupils safe
 - all pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly online
 - stable and consistently strong leadership is found at all levels, including in the early years
 - teacher retention rates improve
 - leaders, including middle leaders, take effective action to improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour, particularly that of boys
 - absence rates of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are reduced to be at least in line with national averages
 - all staff respond appropriately and in a timely manner to concerns raised by parents.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that:
 - the standard of teaching and learning across the school is consistently effective
 - teachers plan work that meets the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, enabling them to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are fully included in lessons, with work that is well matched to their needs.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 17 October 2018

Evidence

This visit focused on leaders' actions to rectify the weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements identified at the previous inspection.

Inspectors met with senior leaders, including those with specific responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. They also met with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and held a telephone discussion with children's social care at Harrow local authority. Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's action plan and records related to health and safety, child protection, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors visited both sites and observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including at playtimes. Inspectors also met with three groups of pupils and spoke to pupils informally about their experiences at the school. Meetings were held with two groups of staff and inspectors spoke informally to staff throughout the inspection. The views of parents and carers were taken into account through discussions at the start and end of the day.

Context

At the time of the previous inspection, senior leadership was provided by an interim executive headteacher and interim associate headteacher from Priestmead Primary School, who had been in post for two months. These arrangements remain in place.

Together with the governing body, senior leaders have overseen significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. At the start of this academic year, several new members of staff have been appointed, including class teachers, middle leaders and assistant headteachers. New leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding have also been appointed. The majority of these appointments have been made on a permanent basis.

It is planned that the school will become an academy within The Pegasus Partnership Trust on 1 January 2019. The trust will initially comprise of Welldon Park Primary School and Priestmead Primary School. There are appropriate plans to secure substantive senior leadership once the school becomes an academy. It is intended that Welldon Park will continue to benefit from the partnership with Priestmead as part of the substantive leadership arrangements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and governors have quickly secured improvements in safeguarding arrangements. Pupils' welfare is now at the heart of the school's work. Staff are united behind leaders' efforts to ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel safe.

Crucially, leaders are beginning to create a culture in which staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just those in leadership and management positions.

The leadership team has made sure that the school has increasingly accurate and reliable information about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders use this information effectively to check that the school keeps pupils safe. While leaders have taken decisive steps to rectify historic weaknesses, some of the improvements they have overseen are recent. More time is required for leaders to fully embed these improvements and establish a strong culture of safeguarding.

The interim executive headteacher and interim associate headteacher lead by example. Since the previous inspection, they have provided both stability and vision for the school community. Staff appreciate how these leaders maintain a visible presence throughout the school day and model high expectations. Parents are positive about the improvements leaders have made. They are confident that their children are safe and well cared for and that leaders and staff respond effectively to any concerns that arise.

Through the recently formed safeguarding committee, governors provide leaders with well-targeted challenge and support. Governors spend time in school regularly to check the rigour and impact of leaders' work. For example, they make sure that pre-employment checks on staff are carried out in accordance with statutory requirements and that these checks are recorded accurately on the single central record. Governors also spend time talking to pupils and staff. They use what they find out to support leaders to prioritise further actions appropriately.

Together with leaders, governors have taken prompt action to rectify the health and safety failings identified at the previous inspection. Leaders and governors assess potential risks to pupils rigorously and take appropriate steps to maintain the safety and security of the building and playground. For instance, they have strengthened signing-in procedures for visitors and staff so that leaders have accurate information on which adults are present on both sites. They have also changed the way parents drop off and collect their children. This means that the start and end of the school day are calm and safe. In addition, governors have worked successfully with leaders to reduce turbulence in staffing. This academic year, leaders have secured a full complement of teaching staff, with the majority on permanent contracts. This is restoring a much-needed sense of community and stability.

Leaders have reviewed safeguarding protocols to ensure they are fit for purpose. Staff have received intensive training so that they understand and follow these protocols when concerns arise. Signs around the school provide clear reminders, should adults require them. Staff have also benefited from suitable training to improve their knowledge of different safeguarding risks. For instance, staff know which signs and behaviours suggest a pupil may be at risk of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation or being drawn into gang-related activity.

Through regular meetings with staff, leaders ensure that safeguarding remains at the forefront of the school's work. Staff value how these meetings provide opportunities for them to refresh their knowledge, ask questions and obtain further information when they need it. This has been key to ensuring that staff not only have the necessary skills to keep pupils safe but also have the confidence to carry out their duties effectively.

Safeguarding records show that staff are vigilant. They report issues promptly and accurately, in accordance with the school's protocols. Leaders respond effectively to concerns that arise and make sure that potential risks to a pupil's welfare are assessed thoroughly. Where appropriate, leaders seek ways to support pupils and families before a situation reaches crisis point. Strong communication and partnership working with external agencies form the basis of this work. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns. They do not shy away from having sensitive conversations or asking challenging questions so that vulnerable pupils receive suitable help and protection.

Leaders have made considerable improvements to the quality of record-keeping since the previous inspection. Child protection records are well organised and appropriately detailed. They provide a clear chronology of the concerns raised and the action taken by leaders and external agencies in response. This means leaders have the information they need to identify when additional steps are necessary to secure pupils' welfare. Marked improvements have been made in how leaders join up all the information available to them, for example regarding pupils' attendance or behaviour, to support their decision-making related to potential child protection concerns.

At the previous inspection, inspectors found that pupils were reluctant to talk to staff about any concerns they might have. Leaders have acted swiftly to create a culture in which pupils are actively encouraged to speak out and ask for help. They have made sure that pupils know who they can turn to in school if they feel worried or unsafe. They have raised the profile of external safeguarding charities so that pupils also know where they can obtain support outside of school. To increase pupils' readiness to share concerns, leaders have also introduced strategies that include 'worry boxes' and invested in an external counselling service to which pupils can self-refer. Pupils were extremely positive about how these changes help them to feel safe and well cared for. They report that adults listen to their worries sensitively and do their best to resolve any difficulties.

At the same time, leaders have made changes to the curriculum to increase pupils' awareness of potential risks to their safety, both inside and outside of school. Pupils benefit from regular safeguarding-themed assemblies and lessons on topics such as safe internet use, road safety and bullying. Leaders involve parents closely in this work. For example, during a recent 'safety week', the school provided a workshop to help parents understand the risks that their children may encounter with online gaming. Newsletters contain regular updates on topics that pupils explore in school,

with parents encouraged to discuss important messages with their children. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to develop the curriculum further. During the inspection, pupils articulated a strong sense of right and wrong and understood the importance of treating others with respect. Leaders are keen to build on this by ensuring that pupils have a secure understanding of difference, for example by learning about different families.

Pupils' behaviour, including in the early years, is much improved since the previous inspection. Poor behaviour, including bullying, is no longer tolerated or overlooked by staff. This is because leaders have introduced a more consistent approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour than was the case in the past. Pupils appreciate how this is helping to improve their behaviour and that of their peers. They told inspectors that poor behaviour and bullying have reduced because staff usually spot issues quickly and give 'serious, but fair consequences'. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour receive the support they need to improve over time. Pupils noted how teachers help them to remain calm, and to avoid behaving in a way that represents a risk to their safety or that of others. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in pupils' behaviour remain, both at playtimes and in classrooms. This is because some staff do not routinely reinforce leaders' expectations for behaviour. Leaders ensure that there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to supervise pupils effectively at breaktimes. Following the recent completion of a new school building, leaders are reviewing how best to use the playground space to enable pupils to play in a manner that is considerate of their peers.

Leaders now keep a close eye on pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders and staff follow up individual concerns at an early stage to ensure that pupils attend school as regularly as they should. Attendance levels have improved considerably this year, including for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders work well with the local authority to ensure that no pupil is at risk of going missing in education.

External support

As at the time of the previous inspection, the school continues to draw on expertise available from Priestmead Primary School. This support has been instrumental in securing the necessary improvements in safeguarding arrangements.