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21 November 2024

Kathryn Yiannadji
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Dear Miss Yiannadji

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Knockhall Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 25 October 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 took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

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, other senior leaders, the trust and the local academy committee 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 also visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, and talked to pupils and staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection in June 2023, there has been a change to the leadership of the school. The current headteacher took up their post in January 2024. There has also been a change to school governance. The new chair of the local academy committee took up their post in April 2024.

The school has focused on improving the curriculum. Due to the setting of ambitious end points, there is now clarity on what the school intends for pupils to learn. In most subjects, the school has carefully sequenced the important knowledge that pupils will need to know to achieve these end points. The school has deliberately focused on a number of subjects at a time. In doing so, the school has created a balance of making rapid improvement, while not overloading staff with multiple changes. Subsequently, staff have secured robust subject knowledge. Lesson activities and resources are used effectively by staff to help pupils to learn.

There are a small number of subjects still being improved. In these areas, the sequence of knowledge pupils will learn is being refined. The school is now prioritising the development of these subjects to make sure that there is improvement across the breadth of the curriculum. Regular monitoring of lessons, as well as discussions with staff and pupils, is being used to measure the impact of any changes. The school uses this information to further refine actions and to support staff.

The school has prioritised the teaching of early reading. Over the past few months, improvements have been rapid, which have included staff training and monitoring. Consequently, staff are expert teachers of phonics, and activities are well matched to the ambitious phonics curriculum that is in place. Pupils show secure phonics knowledge. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge are rapidly identified and the right activities put in place to help pupils keep up with their reading. However, these improvements are new and therefore the impact of them is not yet reflected in published outcomes. In 2024, provisional phonics outcomes for the school were well below national averages of pupils' achievement. Leaders recognise these figures were too low and are taking effective action to ensure that the number of pupils securing phonics in key stage 1 improves.

The school is committed to improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers set clear targets for pupils to work towards and review these regularly with parents. Staff have been trained to provide accurate support to pupils with SEND. Where this is consistently applied, teachers make precise changes to lessons so that pupils with SEND achieve well. However, on a small number of occasions, these changes are not as effective. When this is the case, pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as they could.

School attendance has improved. Overall absence and persistent absence figures have decreased immensely and are now in line with national averages. However, the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils remains too high. The school, with support from the trust, is taking effective action to improve pupils' attendance. School leaders work well

with parents and liaise effectively with external agencies. The demonstrable improvement made to the attendance of many pupils over the past year is one indication that the school is doing all it reasonably can.

The school has identified well the actions that need to be taken, and in what order, to improve. Effective support has been provided by the academy trust and the local academy committee. This has resulted in rapid improvement, especially in the quality of education and attendance. Staff here have experienced multiple changes of leadership. The school has recognised this and focused on providing a consistent approach to staff well-being. Staff are now motivated and inspired by the vision for the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Woodland Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Nina Marabese
His Majesty's Inspector