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Anouska Gardner
Head of School
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Dear Ms Gardner

Special measures monitoring inspection of Barlby High School

Following my visit with Adam Ryder, Ofsted Inspector (OI), to your school on 19 and 20 July 2022, 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 most 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 November 2021. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance 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 the evidence, I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

John Linkins
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 and 20 July 2022

Context

Since the school's section 5 inspection in November 2021, the previous head teacher has left the school. Trustees from the multi-academy trust (Hope Sentamu Learning Trust) appointed an executive principal and head of school. There have been changes in governance, including a new local governing committee.

During this inspection, inspectors focused particularly on the work leaders have been doing to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Inspectors also focused on pupils' personal development and the work leaders have been doing to improve the quality of education.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

School leaders, trustees and governors are clear about what they need to do to improve the school. They have agreed appropriate priorities and plans for school improvement. Leaders have started to track progress against these priorities. It is early days; however, further work is required by leaders and trustees to identify the impact of their work and ensure improvements are made.

New governors have been appointed. Governors have received training, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. They understand more clearly how this applies to pupils at the school. Governors and trustees are now using data and other sources of information to challenge school leaders. Governors and trustees have started to visit the school, observe lessons and meet with pupils. As a result, they now have a more accurate understanding of what is happening across the school.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they now feel safe on school premises, including in the toilets. However, a minority of pupils told inspectors that they still feel uncomfortable in areas not covered by closed circuit television (CCTV). These findings are supported by the results of pupil surveys carried out by leaders. Staff are closely monitoring the areas that concern pupils most and plans are in place to install CCTV.

To address some issues of behaviour and vandalism, toilets are closed at certain times of the day. This has caused distress to some pupils who feel unable to ask for access to the toilets from staff. Leaders have taken action to ensure that pupils can access the toilets when needed by providing toilet passes and an access key at pupil reception. However, this remains an area of concern for some pupils and parents. Leaders recognise these concerns and are working on a solution.

Leaders have introduced new systems for reporting and managing bullying. This includes opportunities for pupils to confidentially report bullying in school and on the school's website. Records show an increase in the number of incidents reported, particularly via the 'yellow sheet' system in which staff record pupils' concerns. Leaders have not

established if this increased reporting is due to more bullying or pupils' greater confidence in using the system. Some pupils are still not assured that all staff will report bullying quickly and effectively. However, pupils who spoke to inspectors said they did not believe instances of bullying had increased.

The school's own records show a reduction in the use of homophobic and offensive language by pupils. While some pupils told inspectors that the use of homophobic and offensive language had reduced, they did not feel that sanctions imposed by staff stopped some pupils repeatedly using this language. Leaders have clear processes in place for dealing with this type of behaviour.

The new curriculum for personal, social and health education is now taught by a specialist teacher. The curriculum plan is built around themes such as diversity, respect and tolerance. This includes respecting those with protected characteristics, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. This curriculum is supported by the 'Respect' programme taught in tutor time. During this time, pupils engage in discussions linked to real life scenarios. This approach helps pupils develop a greater understanding of the impact of their language and behaviour on others. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of this new curriculum.

Pupils and staff report that behaviour has improved in recent months. A new behaviour management system is in place. Pupils understand this policy well. School records show that instances of poor behaviour are reducing across the school. However, a small number of pupils continue to regularly disrupt lessons. As a result, the number of suspensions remains high. Leaders acknowledge the new policy is not yet consistently applied by all staff. Inspectors agree. Leaders have led additional training to help support staff, so that they understand how to apply this new policy consistently.

As part of the school's new behaviour strategy, staff now contact parents directly when there is a concern about a pupil's behaviour. Although these conversations take time, leaders say that they are helping to build positive relationships between staff and parents. This approach is contributing to a reduction in poor behaviour.

There has been a determined effort by leaders to collect the views of pupils. A pupil survey is regularly undertaken to ensure leaders have up-to-date feedback from pupils on a range of matters. Leaders have analysed this information and are beginning to use the results to improve pupil experiences and the quality of education at the school. Leaders provide regular feedback to pupils about their actions. For example, through 'you said, we did' messages each week. Pupils welcome the increased opportunity to share their views.

Leaders acknowledge that curriculum planning is stronger in some subjects, such as English and mathematics. For example, in mathematics, the order in which pupils learn new knowledge has been carefully considered. Activities are planned, so that pupils revisit what they have previously learned. This is intended to help pupils remember important knowledge over time. Assessments have been designed to check what pupils know and can do.

In other subjects, such as science, the curriculum requires more careful thought. The current curriculum at key stage 3 does not adequately prepare pupils to follow an ambitious key stage 4 programme of study.

The programme to support pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read is new. Leaders have developed a four stage approach. This identifies why pupils are struggling to read fluently and how best to support them. Several staff have been trained to provide pupils with individual reading support. Teaching staff have also been given specific training materials intended to help them support struggling readers.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has reviewed the education, health, and care (EHC) plans for the relevant pupils in school. However, some of these plans lack precision. It is not clear what support some pupils require. As a result, staff are unclear about how to adapt lessons to meet pupils' needs. Leaders have planned and started to provide specialist training for staff. The aim of this training is to increase understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is too soon to assess the impact of leaders' work in this area.

Leaders have made several significant changes since the last inspection. Improvements in behaviour and attitudes are evident. In addition, pupils' feedback is beginning to be analysed and acted upon. However, it is too early to assess if other more recent changes have had the impact leaders intend. Quality assurance processes have not been adequately developed. This aspect of leaders' work is now critical to ensure ongoing school improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders should take swift action to ensure pupils with SEND receive a high-quality education by:
 - Ensuring the referral and assessment process for pupils with SEND is fit for purpose and implemented at pace
 - Providing plans that are specific about the support pupils with SEND need and that are reviewed on a regular basis
 - Providing specialist training for staff to ensure that lessons are suitably adapted, where required, to meet the needs of pupils with SEND
 - Quality assuring the content of EHC plans and classroom provision designed to support pupils with SEND.

Additional support

Trust support has been important in providing extra capacity in school leadership. This includes appointing leaders with significant experience in safeguarding and behaviour management. New leaders have acted swiftly to respond to areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. They have implemented a new behaviour system, developed

detailed records of bullying and intolerant language as well as provided support and training for staff. The trust has also provided support for mathematics leaders to help improve curriculum planning. Trust staff have been working with the school's SENCo to improve provision for pupils with SEND.

Leaders have commissioned several external audits of the school's work, including visits from a safeguarding consultant, the local authority and school improvement partners. The information from these audits has been useful for leaders to measure progress towards their action plan. The audits have also helped leaders identify additional priorities for school improvement.

Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, head of school and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer, trustees and members of the local governing committee. They spoke to pupils and staff. Inspectors also considered responses from parents obtained via Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.