

Tribal
Kings Orchard,
One Queen Street,
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

12 December 2014

Mr Andrew Olsson
The Headteacher
The Charles Dickens School
Broadstairs Road
Broadstairs
Kent
CT10 2RL

Dear Mr Olsson

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Charles Dickens School

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 2014, 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 which 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 which took place in September 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, four governors, a national leader of education (NLE) and a representative from the local authority. Brief visits were made to classrooms to look at pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured so that there is clear accountability and a stronger focus on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. New systems for assessment and tracking pupil progress have been implemented. The school has changed how pupils are organised, moving to a year-based system. Year progress managers have been appointed, supported by year support officers and progress support workers. The governing body is being reconstituted to improve the effectiveness of governance of the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders have drawn up an improvement plan which proposes clear and specific actions to address all the areas of concern identified by the inspection report. A good start has been made to implementing the plan. For example, the school's new assessment and recording system is providing robust data to help teachers plan their lessons and provides senior leaders with reliable information on how well all the different groups of pupils are making progress.

The school was calm and orderly. Pupils were engaged with their learning and no pupils had been removed from lessons because of inappropriate behaviour during the period that lessons were observed.

The local authority has brokered the support from a national leader of education, from a local school, and his leadership team. They have begun to work with the school to develop leadership capacity and provide support to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

An external review of governance has been completed and governors have begun to act on the review's recommendations. The Chair of the Governing Body is confident that, by January 2015, the reconstituted governing body will have the skills and understanding needed to move the school forward. Governors, supported by the local authority, have taken steps to ensure they have an effective system to monitor the implementation of the school's action plan and are rigorous in holding senior leaders to account through a planned programme of challenge meetings. A review of the use of additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, has not been completed but is planned for 14 January 2015. The local authority recognises the need for rapid and substantial improvement at the school and is working with the school to ensure it gets the support it needs. The local authority responded rapidly to recommendations for minor improvements to the statement of action and a revised copy was submitted within hours of the completion of the monitoring visit.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint no more than two newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Additional Inspector