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30 January 2015

Vicki Redhead
Acting Headteacher
Bishop Creighton Academy
Vineyard Road
Peterborough
PE1 5DB

Dear Mrs Redhead

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bishop Creighton Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 28–29 January 2015, 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures in January 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:
The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority
cc. The Secretary of State
cc. DfE - Academies Advisers Unit

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Eliminate inadequate teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, and increase the proportion that is good or outstanding, so that pupils make faster progress by:
 - improving pupils' knowledge and skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and number work
 - improving the early reading (phonics) skills of pupils in Key Stage 1, and plugging the gaps in the phonic knowledge of older pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - making sure that pupils improve their work by acting on the guidance teachers provide when they mark their work
 - making sure that pupils are ready to learn and concentrate well throughout lessons.

- Improve leadership and management and increase the capacity of leaders to secure necessary improvement by:
 - increasing the number of staff available to share leadership tasks, including the leading of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
 - building on the work already started to hold teachers to account for the progress made by their pupils
 - making sure that leaders and governors are trained to analyse the data collected about pupils' attainment and progress to eliminate the underachievement of all groups, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported by pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance, to include an evaluation of the school's use of pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection

Evidence

During this inspection, I held meetings with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the consultant headteacher supporting the academy. I spoke with parents and carers in the playground and with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I observed teaching throughout the academy and reviewed pupil progress data, safeguarding documentation, curriculum plans and other documentation including the academy's action plan for improvement.

Context

Since the last visit, two support staff have left the academy and one teacher has taken leave of absence due to long-term illness. One teacher has returned from maternity leave. A temporary teacher has been appointed to a permanent post at the academy. The inclusion leader has been appointed to the role of acting deputy headteacher. The substantive deputy remains acting head. From April 2015, the academy is scheduled to join the Greenwood Dale Trust group of sponsored academies. Since the start of term, a consultant headteacher from the trust has supported the academy for three days per week. A new Chair of Governors started around the same time, following the resignation of the previous chair.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last monitoring visit. Although standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain low in relation to those reached nationally, pupils are beginning to catch up. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where, since the start of the autumn term, most groups of pupils have made the progress expected in their reading, writing and mathematics. Support for pupils making slower progress, which includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is more sharply focused on the knowledge and skills required to succeed. For a high proportion of pupils, learning English as an additional language still slows their progress. The academy's analysis indicates that insufficient practise at home or involvement of this group of pupils in extra-curricular activities are contributory factors.

Pupils are developing a wider range of skills as a result of a better curriculum. For example, Year 3 pupils were observed using clay skilfully, linked to their 'Anglo-Saxons' class topic. Good attention to detail in their own work stemmed from a visit to West Stow which gave pupils a clear idea about what they were striving to achieve. Specialist teaching is similarly promoting wider achievement. For example, sports coaching is helping to develop pupils' physical skills, a stronger aspect of their development when they start at the academy. The academy's progress data shows

that pupils are making better progress when teachers are working with the age groups or in the subjects with which they are most familiar, or teaching subjects they have been asked to lead. Richer curriculum experiences are increasing opportunities for pupils to use and improve their literacy and numeracy skills, as seen, for example, in pupils' writing in Year 5 following a history visit to Warwick Castle. Although evidence of continuous progress as pupils move through the academy remains sparse, the examples of higher standards in different subjects and years that are emerging show that the academy has turned a corner.

The quality of teaching

Teachers are helping pupils to understand the steps required to achieve success. This is motivating pupils to reach the next stage in their learning, particularly where teachers get activities off to a good start by showing them clearly what is expected of them. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities to consolidate the work of the most able pupils by encouraging them to show or talk about their work to other pupils. Higher quality classroom displays that include well-presented examples of work are helping to raise pupils' expectations. However, although all teachers follow the school's marking policy, there is not enough attention given to pupils' presentation of work in books or to the actions pupils take in response to teachers' comments.

Secure relationships between staff and pupils and good behaviour management contribute to the positive environment for learning that is the norm in classrooms. Pupils enjoy teachers' use of humour and praise. Where teachers excite their classes by using stimulating artefacts, film or role play, pupils settle quickly into follow-up tasks that require concentration and individual work. However, the activities chosen for different groups of pupils do not always support them in progressing equally well. Small-group activities are most effective where teachers and other adults question pupils' understanding regularly. This is a strength of the additional group work for pupils at risk of underachieving or for pupils who find learning difficult.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are starting to make a more active contribution to their learning. Better teaching is enabling them to work together, ask and answer questions, investigate ideas and find information more readily. They appreciate the stronger focus on rewarding good behaviour. They are well aware of the academy's 'PRIDE' values because these are reinforced well through assemblies and other aspects of school life. However, opportunities for pupils to play a role in improving the academy are limited. For example, the academy does not currently have a school council. Nevertheless, pupils are helping to raise the profile of the academy in the local community, for example by performing at a local special school.

Since the last monitoring visit the academy has increased pupils' understanding of 'e-safety'. Pupils feel safe and supported at the academy.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The academy's capacity for improvement has been strengthened by the appointment of an acting deputy headteacher and the reorganisation of subject leadership roles. The strong commitment of the acting headteacher and deputy to improving the academy is spreading to other staff. As a consequence, improvements to the curriculum, behaviour management and teachers' planning are evident in classrooms. Although the quality remains inconsistent, the approaches used are coherent across the academy. This provides a sound basis for sharing good practice and for accelerating pupils' progression as they move through the academy.

Improved use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and hold teachers to account continues to underpin the academy's improvements. Senior leaders are using intervention more strategically because they have much more secure knowledge of pupils' needs. For example, a survey into pupils' reading habits has led to wider use of computer-aided reading resources; this is contributing to pupils' enjoyment of reading and higher levels of support by parents and carers. Homework challenges and the 'wow' slips added to children's journals in the Early Years Foundation Stage also show increasing involvement by parents and carers. They appreciate the improvements being made, although few have used Parent View to express support.

The governing body does not have enough impact on the academy. It remains dependent upon a small number of committed governors, including the recently appointed Chair. An external review of governance, recommended at the Section 5 inspection, has not been commissioned.

External support

Consultancy provided by the experienced headteacher on behalf of the Greenwood Dale Trust is consolidating the strategic support provided by the local authority. Regular opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching, monitor pupils' progress and review policies and procedures with the acting headteacher and deputy are proving fruitful. The consultant principal's growing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is helping to broker additional support. For example, visits to other schools and moderation activities to check the accuracy of the academy's assessments are increasing. Work to develop the role of middle leaders has started. Thanks to detailed notes of visits provided by the local authority, additional sources of external support are building on improvements. This is shown, for example, in the support provided to improve pupils' reading and writing in Year 6. In addition, local authority support, through an academy specialising in the teaching of English as an additional language, is helping to refine this aspect of the academy's work. Support

staff are tailoring support with increased precision, following more comprehensive assessment of pupils' language needs.