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16 March 2015

Mrs P Walden
Interim Executive Headteacher
The Children's Trust School
Tadworth Court
Tadworth
KT20 5RU

Dear Mrs Walden

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Children's Trust School

Following my visit to your school on 16 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure the external review of governance is conducted as soon as possible, so that improvements in how governors challenge leaders and monitor the school's progress accelerate.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive of the Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We completed short visits to classrooms together. I evaluated the school improvement plan, scrutinised records of governors' work and documentation about how leaders perform checks on teaching. I also reviewed practices and processes for safeguarding students.

Main findings

You have had a calming and stabilising effect at the school, while showing determination to bring about improvements. The deputy headteacher is now more effective because you have sensibly focused her time on supporting you to improve teaching. Together, you have implemented a robust timetable to systematically check the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the school improvement plan you have written gives a strong steer for how you intend to improve the school further. You have also introduced better systems for setting teachers' targets. Teachers now receive precise and useful feedback about how to improve the quality of their work.

Teachers' assessments of students' achievements have significantly improved. You have led relevant training for all teachers and teaching assistants to enable them to focus more on students' learning. This has helped teachers to plan more effective lessons so that students are beginning to make better progress. This is more noticeable in certain classes, for example where teaching assistants have been used effectively to provide consistent support for the students during lessons. Teaching is still inconsistent because some teachers have not improved their practice as effectively as others.

You have rightly started to clarify the roles and responsibilities of other leaders. As yet, however, those taking on these new roles have not had any significant impact on improving teaching and learning. Therefore, the continued improvement of the school relies too heavily on your leadership.

Systems to safeguard students are now simpler and more robust. There are much clearer procedures for school staff to follow in response to any safeguarding concerns. This means record keeping is now more effective and consistently applied by all staff. Leaders, including governors, are now more rigorous when analysing these records to ensure students are well cared for at the school.

Improvements in governance have been varied. Under the leadership of the new Chair of the Governing Body, governors are beginning to measure the school's success against student outcomes. They have also started to undertake visits to the school to get a better understanding of the difference you are making to provision. However, more work needs to be done. For example, it is less clear how governors will contribute to the monitoring of the school improvement plan. This means they are not able to hold you sufficiently to account for the impact that actions are having on students' learning. The review of governance is also yet to be carried out.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You have rightly made contact with advisors at Babcock 4S (who are employed by Surrey County Council to advise their schools) to provide you with external support. There are now clear plans for how they will work with the school, by carrying out the review of governance, for example. However, they have not been able to provide the support as quickly as you would have liked.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Surrey and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector