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Ms Charlie Blencowe
Headteacher
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Sheffield
South Yorkshire
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Dear Ms Blencowe

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hatfield Academy

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 January 2016, 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 June 2015. 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.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the Trust. I and other inspectors also spoke to pupils, teachers, including newly qualified teachers, and teaching assistants. We observed behaviour around the school and in lessons. We visited a number of lessons for short periods of time. The Trust's statement of action was evaluated.

Context

The HBH Academy Trust are in the process of relinquishing their responsibilities as a trust for Hatfield Academy. They are consulting with REACH4 Trust with the intention of transferring responsibilities by 1 May 2016. There are five members of the senior leadership team including the headteacher. The majority of senior leaders are new to post since the last inspection, having taken up responsibilities from September 2015. The senior leader responsible for teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 was absent for long periods of time following the inspection and has since left the academy. A new member of the senior leadership team took on that role from January 2016. Three out of the four middle leaders also took on their roles as of September 2015 following the last inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local governing board and the Trust board have not been active enough in challenging and supporting the school to bring about the necessary improvements. The external review of governance has not been implemented in an acceptable time frame. There have been no recommendations or actions following the initial review meetings. The senior leadership team have implemented new strategies, for example a new curriculum and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. These changes are beginning to improve the quality of education pupils receive.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school is not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The Trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the chair of the HBH Academy Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2015

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards for all groups of pupils by:
 - immediately raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress in lessons and over time, ensuring that teachers take full account of pupils' prior learning, including in science, when planning work
 - planning work which pupils find interesting and challenging so as to improve their concentration and attitudes to learning
 - ensuring that the basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science are taught consistently well in all classes, including in the early years
 - consistently implementing the new policy for marking to provide feedback to pupils so they can improve their learning
 - improving the impact of teaching provided by support assistants
 - insisting on higher standards of presentation and a greater volume of pupils' written work
 - providing training to improve teachers' questioning skills
 - ensuring equality of opportunity across each class in any given year group
 - strengthening the responsibility of all class teachers as the prime deliverers of high-quality teaching for all groups of pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels of governance, senior leadership and subject leadership, including in the early years by:
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school
 - fully implementing the academy's action plan to improve the use of the pupil premium
 - embedding the newly reformed roles and responsibilities of senior leaders
 - identifying and creating effective subject leaders for all subjects and most urgently for English and science
 - ensuring robust systems are put in place to manage staff performance, holding staff to account for pupils' achievement and financially rewarding only good and better practice
 - providing training for staff matched to any areas which need improvement, paying due regard to those identified in this report

- develop effective links with other schools to learn from the very best practice in teaching
 - urgently improving the strategic leadership provided by governance
 - providing training for governors to improve their ability to hold leaders to account
 - ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
- ensuring teaching is stimulating and motivating for pupils so that they develop good attitudes to learning
 - improving the management of any inappropriate behaviour to reduce the need to exclude pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19–20 January 2016.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the Trust. Inspectors also spoke to pupils, teachers, including newly qualified teachers, and teaching assistants. Inspectors observed behaviour around the school and in lessons. Inspectors visited a number of lessons for short periods of time and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors evaluated the Trust's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan.

Context

The Trust are in the process of relinquishing their responsibilities as trust for Hatfield Academy. They are consulting with REACH4 Trust with the intention of transferring responsibilities by 1 May 2016. There are five members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher. The majority are new to post since the last inspection, taking up responsibilities from September 2015. The senior leader responsible for teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 was absent for long periods of the time since the inspection and has since left Hatfield Academy. A new member of the senior leadership team took on this role from January 2016. Three out of the four middle leaders also took on their responsibilities as from September 2015 following the last inspection. The vast majority of these leaders are not new to the academy.

Outcomes for pupils at the school

In the early years outcomes have been improved. In 2015, the number of children reaching a good level of development was in line with other children nationally. This year, standards are currently above those of children at the same point last year. A focus on developing language skills has enabled more rapid development in this area than seen in previous years.

In Key Stage 1 outcomes have been sustained in most subjects and year groups. The majority of pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, are on track to maintain standards in line with last year's performance, which was just in line with the national profile. The attainment in mathematics of Year 2 pupils is becoming an area for concern. A gap is growing between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils. Attainment in writing, particularly for pupils in Year 1, is also a cause for concern, as pupils are not on track to reach previous levels of attainment.

In Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are not progressing sufficiently well to reach the aspirational targets set by senior leaders. Their attainment is consistent with levels reached in 2015, which were significantly below those of other pupils nationally. As with Key Stage 1, writing is an area of concern due to poor attainment and progress.

Inconsistencies in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are particularly evident across all classes in Key Stage 2. However, overall they are on track to sustain levels reached in July 2015. These outcomes were significantly below those of other pupils nationally. In a minority of classes the progress of disadvantaged pupils is better than that of other pupils nationally and the gaps in attainment are gradually closing, particularly in reading.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Although there have been some improvements in the quality of teaching across all key stages this has not been fast enough. Timescales set by senior leaders in their action plan to improve the quality of teaching have not been met. Consequently, the quality of teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make better progress.

In the early years, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning have raised expectations and the quality of teaching has improved. The curriculum meets the needs of children and positive relationships have enabled better-quality learning.

There are some inconsistencies in the rigour with which teaching and learning have been monitored, particularly in Key Stage 2. Consequently the quality of teaching has not improved quickly enough. Teachers' expectations of how well pupils can learn are still frequently too low. In lessons, teachers' poor organisation and poor behaviour management have not improved; therefore, pupils are too often distracted and not on task. Teachers' questioning skills are still not extending pupils' learning and engaging them in the task of learning.

Better teachers know their pupils well and know how to challenge them to improve appropriately. Some teachers have improved the learning environment so that it stimulates pupils and improves attitudes to learning and, as a result, they are more eager to learn.

In the better lessons in Key Stage 1 teachers now have higher expectations of pupils' ability to organise themselves. Consequently, pupils start learning tasks straight away and demonstrate pride as they strive to reach these expectations.

Teachers' marking, particularly in Key Stage 1, is becoming better at informing pupils how they can improve their work and move on to the next level of learning.

The skills of support assistants remain variable but there are signs of some improvement in this area. Some assistants have undertaken training, which has helped them improve so that the support they offer pupils is more effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Although pupils are fully aware of the new systems in place to manage behaviour, there is still some rough play at break and disruptive behaviour in classes. Pupils are not always engaged and challenged in lessons and this continues to affect their behaviour. The majority of parents consider that pupils are generally well behaved. Some parents comment on how they are better informed about how the school manages behaviour.

The number of absences and exclusions has risen since the last inspection. Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to improve attendance and reduce the number of exclusions. They have not provided clear strategies and actions to tackle this issue.

Pupils work well together. They enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe. The behaviour of children in the early years is better than that of pupils in the rest of the school. Teachers of the younger children have higher expectations and provide a better and more stimulating learning environment.

Incidents of the use of homophobic or racist language are low in number and monitored carefully.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Governance of the academy has been inadequate in enabling improvements so that the school can move out of the category of special measures in an appropriate timescale. The statement of action is still not fit for purpose. The local board of governors and the Trust board have been unacceptably slow in responding to commissioning a review of governance. The review has now been commissioned. However the outcomes and recommendations are still unknown. The review is in its early stages. There is a lack of clarity about the roles and lines of responsibility of the local governing body and the Academy Trust. Meetings fail to provide sufficient support or challenge and school leaders are not appropriately held to account. Important policies, such as the safeguarding policy and the attendance policy, have not been updated, despite being reviewed by the senior leadership team several

months ago. Consequently, procedures are not clear for parents and staff and the website remains non-compliant. The governors' and trustees' lack of ability in engaging external support has prevented improvements in important aspects, such as the quality of teaching.

The headteacher has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, as is evident from the accurately written action plan. Her drive and determination has enabled the improvements which have so far been realised. She has aspirational targets for the school and shares this vision well with the senior leaders. Together with senior leaders she has enabled improvements in the school through the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Other initiatives such as the new curriculum and specialist training are beginning to enhance pupils' experiences at the school. Senior leaders, although relatively new to their posts, have a very clear idea of their roles and responsibilities and share the headteacher's high expectations. She has guided and empowered new senior leaders well so that they have made a positive impact on school improvement.

Pupil premium implementation plans are now fully in place and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupil achievement in some areas, such as reading in Key Stage 2. Strategies such as guided reading lessons, individual tuition sessions and reading comprehension groups have supported better progress.

The new curriculum has enhanced pupils' experiences at the school. Pupils comment on how they enjoy the new curriculum, particularly STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) lessons. The design of early years parental questionnaires has supported the learning of children in this key stage. In their responses, parents are asked to consider their children's strengths and areas for development. Staff in the early years then compare parents' comments with the skills that children demonstrate whilst at school. Any anomalies are noted so that school staff can celebrate strengths and focus on areas for development.

Middle leaders are still developing into new roles and, although aware of their responsibilities, are not yet held fully to account and their impact on teaching and learning is limited. They are currently being supported by the senior leadership team in developing skills to enable them to become more effective.

External support

There is a lack of external support and teachers have few and limited opportunities to observe outstanding teaching so that aspirations and skills can be raised. The headteacher has brokered support from an outstanding academy and this has supported the development of newly qualified teachers well.