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Mr Leo Gilbert
Stockley Academy
Park View Road
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Dear Mr Gilbert

Special measures monitoring inspection of Stockley Academy

Following my visit with Victoria Linsley, Seconded Inspector, and Janet Hallet, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 26 to 27 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 that have been taken since the academy's previous inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that newly qualified teachers should only be appointed to curriculum areas where strong support for professional development can be assured and following discussion with Her Majesty's Inspector.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner, the Education Funding Agency and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that all safeguarding incidents are reported to appropriate parties and recorded immediately
 - reviewing regularly targets and timescales in the academy improvement plan to check that the academy is making progress quickly
 - developing a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching by linking it closely to the progress pupils make over time and how they are improving the quality and presentation of their work
 - strengthening tracking systems so that the progress and attendance of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs are monitored systematically to enable staff to close the gaps between them and other pupils
 - improving the way tutors deliver the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum
 - ensuring greater consistency in the way staff handle bullying incidents and implement behaviour policies
 - increasing the rigour in the way attendance for disadvantaged students is monitored.

- Improve the quality of teaching and achievement for all students, particularly in Years 7 to 9, by:
 - ensuring all staff have the highest expectations of the amount, quality and presentation of work that pupils complete
 - improving feedback so that it clearly identifies what pupils need to do to improve and ensuring that pupils have opportunities to correct their work
 - providing suitably challenging and interesting work for pupils, especially the most able, to challenge them to think more deeply about their learning
 - ensuring that teachers' use of questioning deepens pupils' understanding
 - ensuring that pupils' skills in writing and numeracy are consistently well developed across the curriculum
 - setting all pupils homework tasks which challenge and extend their learning.

- Improve sixth form provision by:
 - increasing attainment in A-level courses and the GCSE re-take examinations in English and mathematics
 - improving consistency in the quality of teaching
 - increasing the proportion of learners who continue from Year 12 into Year 13.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 26 to 27 January 2016

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, the Chair and vice-chair of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors visited a number of lessons with the academy's leaders and spoke to pupils both formally and during break and lunchtimes. The trust's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. A range of documents provided by academy leaders were analysed. These included: policies for safeguarding, the single central record (showing the checks made on the suitability of staff to work with pupils), information on the progress of current pupils, the academy's self-evaluation, the review of governance and, the review of pupil premium. Two recent reviews of teaching and learning, undertaken by external consultants, were also considered. The particular focus of this monitoring visit was on the effectiveness of leadership and management to address the issues identified at the previous inspection.

Context

Following the previous inspection, there have been a number of staff changes, particularly at senior leadership level.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have high ambitions for the academy. They have accurately identified areas that need rapid improvement and have planned specific actions. They are clear about the progress they have made to date. They know that some actions are taking longer than anticipated and have changed plans accordingly.

The Principal has established clear expectations around pupils' conduct, uniform and the presentation of their work. As a consequence, pupils are now smartly dressed and take pride in the work they produce. Pupils know how they are expected to behave around the site and the sanctions they will receive should their conduct fall below the academy's standards. Staff are increasingly intervening when incidents of poor behaviour occur and these are recorded.

The Principal has instigated a system of monitoring teaching and learning which has created an effective culture of professional reflection and development. This has been generally welcomed by staff across the academy. Leaders at all levels regularly check the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on pupils' progress. There are opportunities for teachers and leaders to discuss the outcomes of these observations, and support and further training is provided. New teachers feel supported and value these professional conversations.

Middle leaders work hard to establish strong working relationships across their teams, particularly as there are continuing staff changes in some subject areas. This collaborative working is enabling staff to consistently apply whole-academy initiatives, such as the marking policy.

Academy leaders understand their statutory responsibilities and have begun to introduce more robust procedures for recording and reporting safeguarding incidents. Staff have received relevant training, though academy leaders accept that further staff training on the 'Prevent' duty and child sexual exploitation would be beneficial.

The governing body has been robust in its challenge and support for the new Principal. Governors have high expectations for the academy and are clear about the actions that need to be taken. They are keen to provide external support to ensure that the issues identified at the previous inspection are addressed. A new executive monitoring board (EMB) has been convened, to closely monitor the implementation of the actions listed in the academy's improvement plan. The Principal provides regular progress reports to the EMB. A review of governance undertaken last term, commented on the strengths in the governing body, while highlighting a number of recommendations, principally about the timely sharing of information between all leaders, and the commissioning of high-quality external support.

A review of the senior leadership team has resulted in a number of staff changes. The Principal and the Chair of the Governing Body are in the process of creating a new team, with specific roles and responsibilities that will ensure the academy can continue to meet its action plan targets. They are giving this the highest priority. The Principal needs to secure a very strong team of senior leaders who have the skills and expertise to help him to transform the academy.

Some initiatives, such as the introduction of a new information collection system, have been frustratingly slow for both the governing body and the Principal. While the information system is now in place, and teachers now have appropriate information about pupils' progress, further development is needed on how this information is analysed, particularly about the progress of particular groups of pupils such as the disadvantaged.

There have been too many different action plans and monitoring structures and this has got in the way of a precise and clear plan of action which is understood and driven by all. Academy leaders need to identify key priority areas for action and focus in a coherent and collaborative way on achieving these within identified timescales.

While senior leaders and the governing body share an ambitious vision for the academy, communication channels are not effective enough. It is important that there is a strong culture of trust and transparency so that leaders and governors can share accurate and relevant information regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The Principal has instigated a consistent whole-academy approach to giving pupils written feedback. This is understood by both staff and pupils and is generally used consistently across subjects.

Pupils' work is generally well presented now and there is evidence of an increasing focus by teachers on improving pupils' literacy skills. Basic expectations about presentation are followed by the majority of pupils.

Recruitment and retention of teachers remains an issue across the academy. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning varies enormously. There are some strong teachers, with excellent knowledge and a passion for their subjects. However, staff changes have had a negative impact on some pupils. Academy leaders are doing what they can to address this situation. They are also establishing closer working relationships between more skilled teachers and those who need further development.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are also variable. This is sometimes due to the quality of teaching and how engaging and challenging the activities are. However, some pupils are content to do the minimum required, with low aspirations for their own learning. Low-level disruption and a lack of effort contribute to the poor progress some pupils make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The academy has moved to a house system and a structure of mixed-age tutoring. This has proved to be successful and pupils are clearly proud of their new houses and different coloured ties.

There is a programme of personal, social, health and economic education delivered through the tutor group system and assemblies. However, academy leaders know that the promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is an area that requires more significant attention. The quality and extent of information pupils receive on how to keep themselves safe online or the risks associated with taking drugs or alcohol for instance, are variable. Pupils are given limited, planned opportunities to discuss issues around radicalisation, racism, homophobia and bullying. Consequently, some pupils' prejudices are not actively tackled by staff.

Pupils generally mix well in recreational areas of the academy during break and lunchtimes. Staff and pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved under the new Principal's leadership. However, pupils are too accepting of boisterous and unruly physical behaviour. Offensive name-calling, random acts of shoving and slapping, and derogatory language are so regular they are seen as the 'norm' or 'banter'. Consequently, much inappropriate and threatening behaviour is not reported to staff as bullying. When it is, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The academy supports those pupils who seek help and guidance well. Sixth form learners mentor and support younger pupils through lunchtime activities such as the goddess club, aimed specifically at girls. The effective academy counsellor works well with individuals to support them through issues, such as those relating to mental health.

Pupils know that their academy is improving. However, many would like further opportunities to share their views about the direction it is taking. Many have high aspirations for their futures and want to be more actively involved in the decisions

taken by academy leaders. While there is a school council, some pupils are sceptical about its effectiveness. Many pupils made it clear to inspectors that they want their voice to be heard.

Attendance and persistent absence is still an urgent issue for the academy. While attempts are being made to address the situation, academy leaders do not analyse information to track trends and target interventions more effectively, particularly for those whose attendance is sporadic.

Sixth form learners are very appreciative of the support they receive from academy staff, both academically and in terms of their social and emotional needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Attainment at five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics in 2015, continued to be significantly below the national average. However, it was an improvement on the previous year.

The progress made by pupils from different starting points, in English and mathematics, was also significantly below the national average. Groups of pupils, including the most able, those with special educational needs and the disadvantaged made much less progress than these groups nationally.

In 2015, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

A large proportion of current pupils, across all groups, are not making the progress they should. A legacy of underachievement and poor attendance, particularly for older pupils, means many have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. There have been two formal assessment points since the start of this academic year. They show that the majority of pupils have made some progress, though academy leaders acknowledge that there is still much to do to accelerate their progress still further so that they can catch up with the pace of other pupils nationally.

External support

The governing body has been instrumental in commissioning a plethora of external support for the academy. They have tried to find support of the highest quality that will meet the specific needs of Stockley Academy. While some has been very beneficial, the sheer volume of support has, at times, added to the pressure on academy leaders, particularly the Principal. Equally, some support has provided conflicting advice and guidance, which has not supported academy leaders or the governing body to bring about necessary school improvement. Senior leaders accept that some clarity needs to be sought regarding the focus of external support, and its impact. Recommendations need to be coherently and strategically managed so that academy leaders at all levels can focus on improving the issues identified at the previous inspection.