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Graham Moffatt
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Dear Mr Moffatt

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hanson School

Following my visit with Kate Lounds, Ofsted Inspector, and Diane Reynard, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on the 23 and 24 February 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 previous monitoring inspection.

This was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 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.

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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently improve students' behaviour and safety in the main school, including their attendance and punctuality, by:
 - making sure that all staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding and child protection procedures and systems are fit for purpose to ensure the safety of students
 - ensuring the school's work with the local authority and its agencies results in students being kept safe and secure
 - eradicating bullying so that students stay safe and feel safe
 - ensuring all adults challenge students' misbehaviour and swearing around the school consistently and effectively
 - eradicating incidents of some students' disregard for the safety of others and lack of respect for adults
 - reducing persistent low-level disruption, and instances of misbehaviour in lessons so that learning improves
 - consistently challenging poor attitudes to learning and having high expectations of students' presentation of work, especially for boys
 - reducing the number of students regularly absent from school, particularly disadvantaged students and those with disabilities or special educational needs
 - developing effective practices to ensure students are punctual to school and to lessons

- Swiftly improve the achievement of all groups of students and the quality of teaching so both are consistently good or better, by making sure that:
 - there are high expectations of what all students can achieve, including the most able and boys
 - work set matches the needs and abilities of all groups of students, particularly for those students who are disadvantaged, those with disabilities and those with special educational needs
 - teachers' questioning is skilful, draws out students' understanding and challenges them to think deeply
 - students give extended answers to teachers' questioning in order to improve their level of oracy
 - students' work is marked regularly, clear subject guidance is given for improvement and students are expected to respond to improve their work
 - regular and meaningful homework is provided to students to develop their learning
 - extra support for students, including those with hearing impairment, is managed more effectively to ensure that they make good progress

- reading, writing, speaking and mathematical skills are developed effectively across all subjects.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leaders at all levels, including governors, by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and governors gain overwhelming support from staff for their actions to improve the school
 - greater stability in staffing is achieved to provide students with more continuity in their education
 - there is a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to eradicate that which presently requires improvement or is inadequate
 - the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the achievement, behaviour and attendance of those students supported by it
 - all subject leaders rigorously check the consistent application of school policies so that teaching, learning and behaviour are at least good in all subjects
 - senior leaders support middle leaders effectively in fulfilling their responsibilities
 - support staff are trained effectively to help those students with hearing impairments and other students, especially those with disabilities and special educational needs, to achieve well
 - the school's plans for improvement clearly link to students' achievement and the quality of teaching so the impact of leaders' actions in improving the school can be measured accurately
 - governors hold leaders, including middle leaders, rigorously to account for students' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - governors fulfil all of their statutory duties and meticulously check that the school is compliant with all statutory regulations at all times.
- Increase the amount of progress students make in academic subjects in the sixth form and improve the success rate of students who re-sit GCSEs in Year 12, by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is at least good across all academic subjects
 - all subject leaders check the quality of teaching and progress in the sixth form more rigorously.

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

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

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 23 February 2016 to 24 February 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the consultant headteacher, senior and middle leaders, senior and subject directors from the Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT), groups of pupils, members of the interim executive board and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The substantive principal, who was absent, has left. The part-time executive support headteacher left, as planned, at the end of the autumn term. In January, the part-time consultant headteacher from WCAT became the temporary full-time leader of the school, supported by an experienced academy principal for two days a week. A substantive headteacher has been appointed by WCAT to take over the leadership of the school after Easter. A subject leader and another teacher left the school in January. Since January, a wider range of subject directors from WCAT have started to come into school every week to support school improvement.

Preparations have been made for the school to convert to an academy sponsored by the Wakefield City Academies Trust. The proposed date of conversion is 1 May 2016.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since 1 January 2016, a service level agreement between the interim executive board (IEB), the local authority and WCAT has provided a stronger framework and a greater amount and range of expertise for school improvement. Key stakeholders are working together effectively to bring about improvement and to review progress. The IEB and the local authority monitor the implementation of the contract closely.

WCAT acted promptly to provide an appropriate and effective interim headship arrangement for the spring term and to secure substantive and more sustained leadership of the school from Easter.

Financial and legal obstacles to academy conversion have not been resolved and decisions are awaited from high-level discussions between the local authority and the Regional Schools Commissioner. In the meantime, the open-ended service level agreement has enabled school improvement work to develop more rapidly and more comprehensively than previously. WCAT's senior and subject directors are beginning to make an effective contribution to strengthening the quality of senior and middle leadership and to making improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum.

The consultant headteacher, well supported by an experienced academy principal, has taken prompt and well-focused action to tackle the issues raised at the last monitoring visit. He is highly visible and has helped to maintain the continuity of leadership for staff, pupils and parents during a period of change.

The consultant headteacher and senior leaders have taken effective action to introduce a sharper focus, more rigorous systems and shorter timescales for bringing about improvements in teaching. These are at an early stage of implementation. There are some early signs of improvement. Appraisal has been made more rigorous and more explicitly linked to pay progression. No successful pay appeals were awarded in the recent round of pay reviews. All departments have now been reviewed, with clear targets for improvement.

Subject leaders are beginning to develop their roles, assisted by additional support and expertise provided by subject directors from the trust. They are starting to take more responsibility for reviewing and improving the quality of teaching in their subjects. Subject leaders are beginning to play a greater part in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form. Further training and development is planned to develop their skills in managing staff to bring about improvement.

The head of the sixth form has begun to work with a senior leader from WCAT to raise standards and expectations in the sixth form. The inaccuracy of predictions in 2015 has been tackled and the school is more confident in the reliability of academic assessments. More work is needed to ensure the accuracy of assessment in vocational subjects. Leaders accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form and are starting to benefit from the support and models of good practice provided by WCAT.

The leadership and management of assessment is more effective than previously. Systems for collecting and analysing data are more detailed, comprehensive and purposeful. Data is being used more effectively to inform actions to improve pupil progress. The accuracy of assessment is checked more rigorously by staff with expertise in examining. The formal assessment of pupil tests and coursework is more objective because it is carried out by a teacher who does not teach the class. The next step is to ensure that all teachers promptly receive up-to-date assessment data for each class that they teach.

The leadership and management of learning support assistants has improved. They are now included in relevant professional development activities. They have been given non-contact time to develop their understanding of how well pupils with sight loss and deaf pupils are progressing in different subjects and what they can do to support them more effectively. Stronger leadership of special educational needs has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance by support staff over the last term. They welcome their new performance management targets, are making

productive use of their non-contact time to develop teaching, and feel more valued. The improved ethos of inclusion has led to more positive relationships with parents of pupils with hearing and visual impairment. A review of the Additional Resource Centre (ARC) for deaf pupils and pupils with sight loss has set useful targets for the school to achieve quality awards against external benchmarks.

Leaders are managing temporary staff more effectively this term. Higher-quality temporary teachers have been given longer contracts and more hours so they can make a stronger contribution, particularly in English, where there are five temporary teachers. Temporary staff are receiving improved guidance on schemes of work. They now have clear additional roles and responsibilities for supporting groups of pupils and for aspects of the curriculum that draw on the expertise they bring. The English department is now more stable and consequently pupils are making better and more consistent progress. Last term parents frequently complained about English teaching. There have been far fewer complaints this term.

Significant staffing issues remain. Currently there are nine vacancies in the English department. WCAT has concrete plans to fill some of these posts. WCAT is getting a better response than the school did to its advertised vacancies and it is using a wider range of recruitment strategies. Leaders are hopeful that staffing will be secure by September 2016.

Leaders have introduced more formal procedures for managing staff absence. On the day of the inspection 95% of the staff were at work, compared with 90% at the last visit. Overall, the rate of staff absence remains too high. The legacy of absence earlier in the school year has affected progress of post-16 learners as well as pupils in the main school.

Leaders are strengthening the focus on pupil premium by introducing a class profile for each teacher which identifies pupil premium pupils and a framework for tracking their progress. The pupil premium funding is still absorbed in the overall school budget and leaders have not disentangled it. They recognise that this needs to be done through a more extensive whole-school review of spending and budget planning.

The IEB has acted effectively in establishing the terms of the service level agreement, securing a larger amount of headteacher time and expertise from external partners, and in resolving difficult staffing issues promptly. They act strongly in the interests of the school and the pupils, and work effectively with other key stakeholders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement is beginning to be tackled in a more strategic and effective way. The role of lead teachers has been refocused on mentoring targeted teachers to overcome identified weaknesses, specified in more sharply focused support plans. This smaller leadership team has a clearer focus on rapid improvement in a defined time frame. This new, more bespoke approach is beginning to have an impact on some, but not all, of the weaker teaching. In addition, a programme for moving teaching from requires improvement to good has been targeted at particular teachers rather than relying on self-referral. This programme is in its infancy and it is too early to see its impact.

Additional subject expertise from the trust is strengthening the work of subject leaders and beginning to extend the range of teaching and learning strategies. Some teachers are making better use of data to inform their teaching and to set targets. The quality of marking is improving but remains inconsistent. Teachers are beginning to use more graduated tasks to enable pupils to work at different levels.

Teaching is starting to improve. Too much teaching has significant weaknesses or is not good enough to enable pupils to make good progress.

In the better teaching observed, pupils were interested and engaged by clear explanations and practical tasks. Skilful questioning reinforced understanding and challenged pupils to think more deeply. Detailed and constructive marking led to pupils making accurate improvements in their work. Weaker teaching was characterised by poor classroom management which led to low-level disruption. In some cases, learning was limited by pupils' weak understanding of the teacher's presentation and explanation, for example in mathematics. Some teaching does not check pupils' understanding, or give enough explanation to ensure pupils know how to succeed in the task.

Some science teachers are preparing better designed resources for visually impaired pupils. The school is developing written guidance to enable temporary staff to support pupils with visual or hearing impairment more effectively. Deaf pupils and pupils with sight loss said they were pleased that some teachers are working with them more directly and giving them feedback more often and not just leaving their teaching to the learning support assistant.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is variable. In the best lessons, learning is interactive and meets the needs of different abilities in the group. Learners develop their understanding through skilful questioning, well-managed discussion, well-prepared tasks and well-structured self- and peer-assessment. Helpful marking closely linked to the assessment criteria enables learners to know how to improve. In some post-16 classes, opportunities for learners to talk and discuss are limited, tasks

are not adjusted for learners' different starting points and insufficient use is made of assessment information.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Attendance in the main school is much improved compared with the same time last year. Attendance has steadily improved each term and persistent absence has been reduced. The gaps in attendance between pupils with and without special educational needs have narrowed, as has the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others. More detailed analysis of patterns of attendance by individuals and groups has led to more targeted and proactive intervention. Home-school liaison has been more effective. Some post-16 learners do not attend well enough. Punctuality has gradually improved, although some pupils are still late for lessons and for school.

Pupils say that behaviour has continued to improve. They understand that expectations of behaviour are higher, systems are tighter and they are complying more willingly. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced. The increased use of internal exclusion has been used to actively work on improving individual pupils' behaviour.

Generally, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they work collaboratively and productively. Pupils display weaker attitudes to learning and engage in off-task chat when teaching is weaker.

Pupils' behaviour and movement around the school is safer, more orderly, calmer and better controlled. There is less litter around the building.

As part of a new 'be ready, be respectful, be resilient' initiative, bag checks are made at the school entrance to ensure that pupils have the necessary equipment for learning. Staff carry this out respectfully and with good humour, which reinforces the clear message about being prepared for learning. For example, some post-16 learners, especially boys, do not come to lessons fully equipped, their note-taking is thin and their commitment to learning is not strong enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders are predicting an overall improvement in GCSE outcomes, with higher proportions gaining grades A* to C in most subjects. In some cases this is because the current Year 11 has taken two-year rather than one-year courses. For example, in 2015, low results in design technology were because pupils had only taken a one-year course in Year 11, having not studied design technology since Year 8.

The school predicts that outcomes will rise in English and mathematics. In the autumn term many Year 11 pupils had not completed their English coursework. Senior leaders stepped in, with strong support from WCAT's English director, to

provide pupils with dedicated time and extra sessions to catch up on their coursework, including during holidays and after school. As a result, most of Year 11 have now caught up on their English coursework. The school is using more rigorous methods of marking and checking the accuracy of assessed work, including in English. The progress of Year 11 pupils is being tracked more assiduously and actions to accelerate progress are better coordinated across English and mathematics. As a result, the chances of pupils gaining a grade C or above in both English and mathematics are increasing. The school is predicting an improvement in GCSE English outcomes but also predicts that pupils are unlikely to achieve as well as they should in English due to the long-term impact of staff instability and discontinuity in learning. School predictions are based on Year 11 pupils making strong progress between now and the exams. If progress is weaker, the school may not meet the government's 2016 floor standard for the minimum amount of progress expected at GCSE.

In 2015, post-16 learners progressed in line with national averages in A-level and vocational subjects. A review by school leaders identified that underachievement at AS level was linked to inaccuracy of predictions. As a result, a more formal system of regular exam-paper assessments has been introduced, with more checking of assessment within departments. This is due to be extended through links with the wider network of post-16 providers in the trust. In addition, underachieving learners were not being identified quickly or consistently enough. They are now being targeted and supported more effectively. In 2015, most learners retaking GCSE English succeed in gaining a grade C, though few succeeded in mathematics. More stable staffing and better timetabling in mathematics are designed to increase the outcomes of GCSE retakes in mathematics.

Leaders predict that in 2016 learners will make progress in line with national expectations in A-level vocational and academic courses and in AS-level academic courses. Current Year 12 learners are not making enough progress on vocational courses.

External support

External support from WCAT has increased leadership and management resources at all levels and across a wide range of subjects and aspects of the school. This is at the early stages of making a positive impact on school improvement. WCAT staff have established effective relationships with senior and middle leaders and they liaise effectively with local authority staff. School leaders at all levels welcome their expertise, wider experience and tried and tested methods and resources.

Local authority-funded appointments continue to support school leadership, including leadership of the Additional Resource Centre. The local authority works effectively alongside the trust in carrying out school reviews and school consultancy.

Local authority consultants have provided effective support for mathematics, English, attendance and behaviour. As WCAT has increased its capacity the local authority has reduced its level of support. The local authority monitors the impact of the service level agreement appropriately and actively maintains its overview and responsibility for school improvement.