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Ms Linda Foley
Head of School
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Dear Ms Foley

Special measures monitoring inspection of Enterprise South Liverpool Academy

Following my visit with Lenford White, Ofsted inspector, to your school on 24–25 May 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2014. 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 am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Liverpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2014.

- Improve teaching and thereby raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, for all students, including disadvantaged students, the most able and those with special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring all teachers adapt their teaching to suit the needs and abilities of their students
 - making sure all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve
 - providing work that is appropriately challenging to the most able students
 - ensuring all students with special educational needs get the help they need to make good progress
 - establishing a clear and coherent policy that is followed by all teachers across all subjects to improve students' basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy.

- Improve students' behaviour by:
 - eliminating low-level disruption by ensuring all lessons are suitably engaging
 - improving attendance and punctuality by working more effectively with parents so that they make sure their children attend regularly and on time.

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - reducing variability across subjects by holding subject leaders more effectively to account for performance in their subject
 - making sure that all students who do resit examinations in English and mathematics at GCSE level achieve this qualification.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - embedding procedures to manage the performance of teachers so that underperformance is eradicated
 - ensuring all heads of department set a good example by communicating high expectations for all students and are held to account more rigorously for teachers' performance in their area of responsibility
 - embedding current initiatives to improve the quality of teaching so that all teachers get the help, support and guidance they need to teach all groups of students effectively and, in so doing, raise achievement
 - improving self-evaluation so that it more accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - sharpening the school improvement plan so that it contains clear,

measurable success criteria with timescales so that the school can, at regular intervals, see how well it is doing and what still needs to be improved

- ensuring that funds available through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding are spent appropriately so that all students eligible for this support make better progress
- ensuring the curriculum effectively supports the development of students' basic skills.

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 fifth monitoring inspection on 24 May 2016 to 25 May 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers, groups of pupils, governors and representatives from the trust, sponsors and local authority. They observed teaching and learning in all year groups and spoke with teachers following observations. They spent time observing how pupils behaved around the school during break and lunchtime.

Context

A new head of school was appointed at the beginning of March this year and the senior leadership team has been restructured. A new director of finance and resources, who works across both academies in the trust, has joined the senior leadership team. At the start of this month a special educational needs coordinator, appointed to work across both academies, took up her post.

A new head of English and trust director of English have been appointed. They will take up their full-time positions in September 2016, but will be doing some work in the school during June and July.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Governors and sponsors acted swiftly and decisively in response to the concerns raised at the last monitoring inspection. Significant changes have been made at senior leadership level, with a new head of school and a restructure of the team. Throughout this time of change, the school has continued to benefit from the executive headteacher's strong leadership skills, qualities and experience.

Staff spoken to during the inspection feel that the new head of school has changed the culture and improved morale. They feel more valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school. One teacher described a new sense of positivity that has, 'lifted spirits'. Pupils also acknowledge the changes over recent months, particularly in improved behaviour.

Systems have been introduced to ensure that leaders consistently monitor and evaluate their work and there is an increased sense of accountability. However, while leaders are providing more information about what they are doing, there is still not enough focus on evaluating the impact of their actions on outcomes for pupils.

In discussion with the inspector, sponsors and governors spoke of how they were not afraid of making tough decisions. Their actions since the last monitoring

inspection provide evidence of this. They are driven by the knowledge that pupils in the school have been failed for too long and are unwilling to accept any further underperformance. Consequently, while support for staff is made available as required, 14 members of staff have left the school since the last monitoring inspection. Over recent months governors have received much more information about leaders' actions but they need to question continually what difference this is making to pupils' outcomes.

Leaders across the school are now working with a much greater sense of urgency, and there is evidence that their actions are having impact, particularly on pupils' behaviour, punctuality and attendance. However, leaders are acutely aware that these actions have come too late to have a significant impact on the outcomes for Year 11 pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Since January this year, senior leaders have given a much higher priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They have challenged underperformance more robustly and as a result a significant number of teachers have left the school. Alongside this challenge, senior leaders are providing personalised support and training for those teachers whose practice is not typically good.

Observations of learning across the school indicate that more pupils are benefiting from good teaching than at the last monitoring inspection. However, variability remains both within and between subjects. Throughout the school day, there is a calm and purposeful learning environment across the school.

Students in the sixth form speak highly of the quality of teaching they receive, and value the strong relationships they have with their teachers. Inspectors saw evidence of this in health and social care, and creative media lessons.

Some teachers are encouraging their pupils to develop effective learning habits and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Evidence of this was seen in two Year 8 English groups where pupils were studying the genre of detective fiction. However, there are still not enough pupils being challenged to make the best possible progress in lessons throughout the school.

The work scrutiny that inspectors carried out with senior leaders provided further evidence of this mixed picture of pupils' progress. Senior leaders believe that the quality of marking has improved since January and inspectors saw some evidence of this, but the quality of written feedback remains inconsistent. The scrutiny revealed examples of pupils who are producing work consistently below their target grade but not being given any specific advice on what they need to do to improve. In contrast, inspectors also saw evidence of pupils improving their work after receiving effective feedback from their teachers.

In response to concerns raised at the last monitoring inspection, senior leaders improved the clarity of target setting and assessment procedures, and the way pupils' progress is reported to parents. Leaders are only at a very early stage of developing their new assessment system for next year, linked to the new national curriculum. Much work remains to be done between now and September to ensure that assessment across the school is accurate, and supports teachers in their planning and practice so that pupils make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Improving pupils' attendance has been very high priority for leaders since the last monitoring inspection. The impact of the actions taken since January can be seen in the 2% increase in the spring term attendance figure compared to the same term last year. However, because attendance was so low during the autumn term, the overall improvement for this year compared to last year is only 0.3% and still well below the national average. While the overall attendance figure has improved slightly, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability has deteriorated. There has been a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, but this remains well above the national average. Actions taken to improve punctuality have had a dramatic impact and there has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are late to the school.

Pupils and staff talk very positively about improvements in behaviour across the school. Inspectors observed very little disruption to learning. Pupils continue to behave in a calm and mature manner at break and lunchtime. Leadership of this aspect of the school's work is much stronger and a new behaviour management and rewards system has been introduced. Leaders recognised that too many pupils were missing out on their education because of fixed-term exclusions. New procedures have been introduced to deal with pupils who present challenging behaviour and, as a result, no pupil has received a fixed-term exclusion since January.

The pupils spoken to during the inspection do not think that bullying is an issue within the school. There has been only one reported racist incident since the last monitoring inspection and the records indicate that this was dealt with effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

The latest assessment information for Year 11 pupils indicates that although there will be improvements in the headline attainment and progress figures compared to last year, the school is in danger of not meeting the government's floor standards for the third year running. There is no doubting the effort that has been put in since January to improve outcomes for Year 11 pupils, but leaders accept that there has not been enough time to compensate for the legacy of underachievement that has existed in the school.

Assessment procedures are now more rigorous, and leadership of this aspect of the school's work is much stronger. Internal moderation that is externally validated has led to greater accuracy of assessment, but leaders are aware that some teachers require more development in this area.

The most recent mock examination indicates that outcomes in core science will show little improvement on the very poor results last year. This is of particular concern as leaders were reporting that pupils were making better progress in this subject at the time of the last monitoring inspection.

Leaders spoke to inspectors about the actions they are taking to reduce the achievement gaps for the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school. However, the predictions for Year 11 outcomes indicate that these are not having enough impact. The gaps in overall attainment and progress in English are set to narrow slightly but the progress gap in mathematics is predicted to widen by a small amount. Assessment information for Year 11 pupils who have special educational needs or disability shows that they are making better progress than last year in mathematics but not in English.

Assessment information for students in the sixth form indicates that outcomes in both academic and vocational courses are set to improve on the previous year. Students' achievement in the sixth form enables them to progress successfully to higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Particularly impressive is that 74% of students have been offered places at university compared to 43% last year, and 28% of the offers are from Russell Group universities. Actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes for students who resit mathematics and English have had impact. A significant number of students improved their grades in the November examinations, particularly in mathematics.

External support

The local authority continues to provide strong and effective challenge and support to the school. Since the last monitoring inspection the local authority has carried out a leadership review and a review of the science department. Alongside this, ongoing support is provided to the English, mathematics and science departments as well as to attendance staff in the school. It is clear that the local authority is genuinely committed to working alongside the sponsors, governors and leaders to improve outcomes for pupils in this school.