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Christine Woods
Principal
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Dear Mrs Woods

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ormiston Endeavour Academy

Following my visit with Patricia MacLachlan, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 June 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.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 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 appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of the interim executive board and the director of children's services for Suffolk local authority.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy, in order to raise pupils' attainment, by:
 - setting work that provides the right level of challenge for pupils and builds on their prior learning
 - improving the quality of marking across all subjects so that pupils are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve
 - making more effective use of teaching assistants to support teachers in the classroom and to support pupils' learning
 - using questioning more effectively to challenge and engage pupils, develop their speaking and listening skills, and encourage them to develop their reasoning and extend their thinking
 - ensuring that pupils develop a pride in the presentation and quality of their work.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders all work effectively to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement in their subject
 - the academy's policies are applied consistently throughout the academy
 - the impact of the support provided through the pupil premium is rigorously monitored
 - an external review of governance is conducted.

- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
 - ensuring that all staff consistently follow the academy's behaviour policies and challenge infringements of the code of conduct
 - further reducing avoidable absence and stress to pupils the importance of attendance.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 June 2016

Evidence

Inspectors evaluated documentation, observed the school's work and met with the principal, Ormiston's regional director and chair of the progress board, nominated senior and middle leaders, individual teachers and pupils. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the interim executive board (IEB).

Context

There have been few notable staff changes. However, the school has appointed an attendance officer since the last visit and six teachers are leaving at the end of term. Each vacancy has been filled, ensuring that the school is fully staffed in September. The successful recruitment of pupils into Year 7 will increase the number on roll.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils are making accelerated progress across all areas of the curriculum, and all year groups, because the quality of teaching is better, teachers' expectations are higher and pupils are developing more positive attitudes to learning. Underpinning these higher expectations is a more rigorous approach to monitoring pupil progress: any pupils who fall behind, have a lapse in attendance or misbehave are quickly identified and given suitable support. Evidence from assessment information and evaluations of teaching and learning gives leaders confidence that examination results this year will be significantly better than in 2015. This also shows that gaps in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are narrowing. The most able pupils are making particularly good progress; the school expects a significant increase in the highest GCSE grades this year.

The daily reading initiative, started in February, has already made a marked impact on reading standards of pupils in Years 7 and 8. Initial analysis shows that pupils have made accelerated gains from their respective baseline reading scores, and that the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is particularly impressive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Systematic monitoring by school leaders indicates a much higher proportion of good and outstanding teaching, even in the few weeks since the last visit, and none that is inadequate. The improved picture is the result of whole-school strategies for strengthening teaching, learning and assessment, and well-targeted support for teachers whose practice is not yet consistently good. Observations of teaching during the visit show that teachers are

more confidently directing and managing pupils' learning, so that lessons can proceed apace. A key element of this improvement is that the positive climate for learning, noted at the last visit, has been strengthened further. One useful development has been establishing the right conditions for learning in classrooms, and in each episode of the lesson, so that pupils are clear about whether they are working independently, in pairs, in groups or as a class, and what the expectations are in each situation.

Evidence from observations, talking to pupils and looking at their work shows that pupils' learning is improving, both in terms of quality and quantity. Work is more challenging, particularly for those pupils with lower starting points, because teachers better understand the potential of their pupils and set more ambitious 'learning outcomes' when planning their lessons. The most able pupils are also stretched, but what they and their classmates can achieve is sometimes inhibited by lessons or schemes of work that are not ambitious enough. Some short-term aims focus on what the pupils will do, rather than what they should achieve, and in completing the set tasks the pupils fail to extend or deepen their understanding. Work to review the curriculum is planned. This is vital because pupils' learning and progress are hampered in some instances when expectations of what pupils can understand or do, outlined by schemes of work, are too low. Conversely, some gaps in pupils' basic skills or knowledge need to be filled.

Teachers are using marking and assessment more effectively to steer improvements in pupils' learning and progress. Marking expectations have been clarified, and teachers are following the school's policy more consistently so that assessment is effective without being too burdensome.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' personal development and behaviour continue to improve. The impact of the collective work of staff can be observed in the calm climate in lessons across the school. It is also seen in the sensible way that pupils conduct themselves throughout the day, arriving to school and leaving at the end of the day, in assembly and at break and lunchtimes, even in the face of monsoon-like weather conditions. Improvements are reflected in the sharp decrease in the number of pupils removed from lessons or subject to fixed term exclusion. However, the permanent exclusion of three pupils, since the last visit, shows that extreme or persistent poor behaviour by a small minority of pupils remains a challenge. A few pupils have not responded to the school's higher expectations; they struggle to behave consistently and do not have positive attitudes to learning. This is being effectively addressed in three main ways:

- staff impose the same expectations in terms of what they expect and how they deal with misdemeanours

- procedures for dealing with disruptive behaviour are implemented swiftly and effectively and are escalated appropriately, including the use of the lesson removal room and the turnaround centre
- there is excellent support for individual pupils who need one-to-one guidance, including support plans. In most cases, this enables pupils to reintegrate into everyday life at school and not fall too far behind.

High levels of supervision by staff ensure that pupils behave well and feel safe and well cared for. Pupils understand what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and acknowledge that a stricter regime enables them to achieve more. During the visit, pupils behaved very well and showed positive attitudes to learning: they were punctual to lessons, attentive and worked steadily. They are beginning to take much more pride in their work, and talk more confidently about their learning. The school's efforts to positively recognise good attitudes are reflected in the higher number of rewards and phone calls home.

Attendance figures continue to rise, but not as quickly as leaders would expect, given their efforts. Reducing pupil absence, particularly of underachieving groups, remains a key priority.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has successfully consolidated and extended the improvements noted at the last visit. The principal continues to steer the school's improvement and galvanise staff so that morale is buoyant, and teachers work hard to respond to all that is asked of them. Senior leaders form a strong and cohesive team, and middle leaders are confidently fulfilling their roles and are working hard to implement changes and to monitor the planned actions. The main difference from a year ago is that leaders assume responsibility for provision and outcomes in their subjects and are quick to take the initiative and make changes when necessary. The second phase of the school's 'rapid improvement plan' has made an impressive impact because it has been led and managed by middle leaders.

All in all, the school is now well placed to make rapid and sustainable improvements in provision and outcomes for pupils. It is developing a culture where staff and pupils can be trusted to succeed without such tight supervision and surveillance. The displays of exceptional photography epitomise this development: the work models high aspiration and demonstrates what pupils of all abilities can achieve.

The progress board and interim executive board fulfil their respective roles in holding the school to account and supporting senior leaders. Representatives are well informed and knowledgeable about the school's performance and priorities. Sensible plans are in place to reinstate a local governing body from September, so that the wider work of governance is resumed.

The school is working successfully to better engage parents. The parent forum is developing well, attendance at the most recent parents evenings has been much higher, and home-school communication is better. However, the balance of opinion on Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) is not very positive, particularly with regard to pupil behaviour and whether parents would recommend the school. Leaders acknowledge that work remains to be done to ensure that parents have an accurate view of the school, and to canvass the views of parents more widely, beyond the small sample who have responded to Parent View.

External support

The school continues to make effective use of external support, including links with other academies in the trust and its teaching school.