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Ms Charlie Blencowe
Principal
Hatfield Academy
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Dear Ms Blencowe

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hatfield Academy

Following my visit to your school on 16–17 November 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 third monitoring inspection since the school 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.

The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the transition governing board, the chair of the Reach4 Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. 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 that took place in June 2015.

- 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
 - developing 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 third monitoring inspection on 16–17 November 2016

Evidence

During the two days the inspector held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, the chair of the transition board and several members of the Reach4 Trust, including the chief executive officer, the director and deputy director of education. The inspector spoke to a number of parents, met with pupils and listened to least- and most-able pupils reading. The behaviour of pupils and the management of behaviour were observed throughout the school day. The inspector visited lessons in all classes and spoke to pupils about their learning. These visits were made with members of the senior leadership team. The inspector studied a range of documentation such as that relating to pupils' progress, safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching and learning, and the school development plan. The inspector also read the Reach4 Trust's statement of action and reviews completed by the trust, such as those relating to special educational needs and the pupil premium.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, there has been very little change in the senior leadership team, the transition governing board and the Reach4 Trust's management team. There have been some changes in the middle leadership team with four of the seven middle leaders new to leadership roles and four new to the school. The teaching team has seen little change since the last monitoring inspection. Since the last monitoring inspection, the new trust, the Reach4 Academy Trust, has completed a statement of action.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The processes for monitoring teaching and learning are now firmly in place. Senior leaders take an active part in improving the quality of teaching not only by monitoring but also by modelling outstanding practice. Teachers identified as needing extra support also gain support and guidance through the trust. Senior leaders and members of the transition board have a very accurate picture of the quality of teaching in school from the regular evidence gathered. The principal has brokered further professional development for teachers through liaison with outstanding schools. Support and monitoring have led to improvements in the quality of teaching across the school.

Teaching assistants have received training in supporting pupils' learning so that they now help and guide those with particular needs. The effectiveness of these new skills in improving pupils' learning has yet to be evidenced. A recently trained special educational needs coordinator has developed individual plans for every pupil with specific learning needs. The director for inclusion from the Reach4 Trust has completed a review of the provision for pupils who need extra support. These

processes have highlighted the leaders' need to follow the progress of these pupils more closely to support learning and help them make better progress.

Senior leaders have very clear lines of responsibility and accountability which are now well established. The principal devolves responsibility to her team extremely well and ensures that they have the training and support to help them improve. Middle leaders have lines of responsibility and accountability but not all have developed fully the skills to perform these roles effectively. They are currently taking part in middle leadership programmes made available through the Reach4 Trust.

Many members of the governing transition board are also members of the Reach4 Trust. The board has a sound knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning in school. School leaders have a school development plan in place and the Reach4 Trust has a statement of action. Both documents accurately identify areas for improvement with clear measurable targets and lines of responsibility. They are accurately risk assessed so that it is clear which actions require more or faster attention. Governors take a very active role in supporting and challenging the school. They are acutely aware of how the school must adapt some information so that it is useful to members of the permanent governing body when it is formed.

All leaders and managers recognise succession planning and building capacity as key elements to the school becoming good or outstanding. They know that current improvements need to be sustained. They recognise the need to ensure that systems are in place and all staff have clear lines of responsibility and accountability and are able to demonstrate the skills to carry out their role effectively.

Parents confirm that the school is improving although many find that improvements, since the judgement of special measures, have been too slow. Parents say that behaviour has improved and consider that the increased stability in teaching staff is helping their children make better progress. The responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are more positive than on previous inspections. The assistant principal has been instrumental in introducing Hartfield Academy Community Hub (HACH) and organising day and evening parent forums, open days and drop-in sessions to encourage better communication links with parents and carers.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. All staff are well trained and receive regular safeguarding updates. Procedures and contact details are well displayed in a number of areas. Liaison with parents and outside agencies is good. A culture of keeping pupils safe permeates the whole school. At breaktimes, pupils are very well supervised by adults who are vigilant and mindful of the needs of all pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Learning in books and lessons demonstrates that improvements have been made in

the quality of teaching and that the attainment of pupils, particularly in key stage 2, is rising. The difference between pupils' attainment and that of other pupils nationally is beginning to diminish. However, not all classes show strong enough signs of improvement or are sustaining improvements made. In some lessons, pupils learn at a faster rate. For example, in Year 2 mathematics lessons, teachers continually adapt tasks to challenge pupils more deeply or to clarify misunderstandings. In some lessons, teachers show great skill in questioning pupils to check their understanding and to help them think for themselves. However, this is still variable across classes and needs to be sustained consistently throughout the school. Portfolios of writing work in Year 6 show evidence of the much better progress some pupils are now making in this area of learning. Some teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to plan appropriate learning in lessons so that the different ability needs of pupils are met. This is not consistently strong enough throughout the school. Frequently, most-able pupils are now challenged at a more appropriate level but too often this means that the least able are not gaining an understanding of concepts taught. Pupils' books show that the marking and feedback policy is generally followed well. In some year groups, marking is not always precise enough and errors continue to be made. The overall presentation of pupils' work has improved. Support from teaching assistants is now more effective as they are more skilled following training and support. The support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now more focused but the impact on their progress is not evident.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils comment positively on improvements in behaviour. Better behaviour has been sustained and continues to improve pupils' learning attitudes and help improve learning in lessons. Pupils comment on the reduction of poor behaviour in the form of name-calling and fighting.

Pupils, particularly older ones, know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They know what cyber bullying is and know how to react if they become a victim of it. Pupils say they feel safe. They also say how lessons are now more fun. For example, they comment on how they enjoy the experiments they complete in science lessons. Pupils learn about different religions and have a growing knowledge of different cultures through their geography lessons. They still have a limited knowledge of differences found in British society today and how they should respond when experiencing difference. Behaviour management is now consistent throughout the school. Pupils generally behave well even when learning is not always sufficiently engaging or meeting their needs. Rates of exclusion continue to fall and rates of attendance continue to rise.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' progress from starting points, particularly in key stage 2, continues to be slow due to a legacy of underachievement. However, the progress of these pupils in

English and mathematics is improving. Outcomes for children in the early years and key stage 1 continue to be similar to those of other children nationally.

Pupils' work in books and in portfolios demonstrates that many pupils are now making progress at a faster rate than previously seen. However, this is not consistent across the school and reflects the lack of consistency in the quality of teaching.

Where there has been a change of teaching staff, careful monitoring and support by senior leaders, such as in key stage 1, are given so that progress and attainment are not affected. Outcomes for pupils in writing are rising and differences in attainment between pupils in the school and other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish. This improvement is still variable and has yet to be sustained. In some lessons there is evidence of higher expectations from teachers so that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are helped to learn at a faster and more appropriate rate. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making sufficiently rapid progress to diminish the differences in attainment between them and other pupils nationally.

External support

The principal continues to broker external support from at least two outstanding schools and from senior leaders in education. She has also sought assistance from other agencies such as the National Health Service whose representatives have attended parent forums to help parents gain a greater understanding of issues such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum disorder.

Following the judgement at the second monitoring inspection, the trust has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose.