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Mr Richard Burgas
Principal
Oak Academy
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Dear Mr Burgas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oak Academy

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that teaching:
 - secures good outcomes in every subject area
 - challenges the most able to achieve their potential.
- Improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive principal, the principal, the chief executive officer of the trust, other senior leaders and pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Lessons were observed, a work scrutiny took place and the single

central record for safeguarding was checked.

Context

Since the last visit, a vice-principal for standards and curriculum has been appointed, and also an assistant vice-principal who is in charge of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum. The school will be supported by a different trust from August 2017. This had been anticipated for February 2017 but has been delayed.

Main findings

You have continued to tackle a range of issues consistently and effectively. The commitment to improve the standard of education for pupils is unstinting and is showing clear signs of moving in the right direction.

Staff turnover has remained high. However, you are confident that it is stabilising now, with a strengthened leadership team. This is providing capacity for the monitoring of teaching and holding subject leaders to account. There is more consistency in teaching of a high quality. Consequently, the majority of pupils' work is of a high standard. Most pupils show a pride in their presentation and have tidy workbooks with notes that will benefit them in future assessments. Now, there are relatively few subject areas that need further attention, and so it is possible to focus more expertly on subjects such as languages, mathematics and science.

You have worked hard to make the school a calm and well-ordered environment. Pupils are ready to learn and engage with teachers. As yet, not all subjects are providing the level of challenge necessary for the most able pupils to thrive and flourish. Learning is not making enough difference for the most able pupils in the school with regard to the depth of their thinking and reasoning; this includes some of the sixth form students.

There has been greater concentration on providing for the needs of disadvantaged pupils. You have worked hard to ensure that teachers adapt their teaching to support disadvantaged pupils more proficiently. This has had a positive impact. You and your staff have diminished the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others considerably and, across several subjects, there is no difference. The next step is to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves so that it is in line with the national average. You have put several measures in place but, despite this, the attendance of a minority of pupils has remained stubbornly low.

You have, rightly, focused on the well-being of pupils and the opportunities offered to them as future citizens. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is enhancing the lives of pupils, especially the older ones. They have a

greater awareness of British values and the fundamental principles of British law and democracy. You have appointed tutors to guide students in the sixth form, both academically and emotionally, and this has addressed a significant gap in their previous education. Students appreciate this and the involvement they can have with the rest of the school in positions of support and responsibility.

You have worked very hard to improve the sixth form provision. A leader of the sixth form was appointed in September 2016. You and the executive principal have ensured that the curriculum offer is fit for purpose. In addition, you have secured the support of six universities and local and international businesses to mentor and work with students to raise aspirations of what careers are possible following school and higher education. The recruitment of Year 11 pupils to the A-level subjects has been more stringent and as a result fewer fail to complete their courses. As well as considering the academic success of the students, you have made sure that their well-being is considered too. In the past there were no tutor groups for students, but now students can discuss any concerns with a mentor on a regular basis. When the formal aspects of the new trust alignment have taken place, there will be further discussions about improving appropriate facilities to enhance the study environment further for the students.

The good systems for planning and evaluation are maintained by the executive principal in his work with you. This provides a constructive steer as well as the continuing delivery of quality professional development to support colleagues as they move forward in their careers.

External support

The chief executive of the trust that takes over the leadership of the school in August has an astute awareness of the strengths and areas for development in the academy. The trust has supported material improvements, such as the refurbishment of the mathematics department's rooms. Provision such as this aids learning in more subtle ways, and enables pupils to feel valued and take a pride in their school. The loyalty of pupils came across very strongly in discussions with them, and is an incomparable asset.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bournemouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector