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Mr Mark Eames
Cambridge Park Academy
Cambridge Road
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
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Dear Mr Eames

Special measures monitoring inspection of Cambridge Park Academy

Following my visit with Peter Mckenzie, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 23–24 May 2017, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 2016.

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 proprietor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

- As a matter of urgency, improve the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements by making sure that:
 - all required checks on the suitability of staff are in place and the school's record of checks is complete and meets Department for Education requirements
 - all staff are well trained and knowledgeable about how to promote all aspects of pupils' personal development, behaviour, safety and welfare
 - the school's safeguarding policies and procedures follow current Department for Education guidance and are clear, understood and consistently applied
 - pupils' behaviour is managed safely and well.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by making sure that:
 - leaders and governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of all areas of the school's work, especially the arrangements for safeguarding pupils
 - leaders and governors closely monitor the quality of teaching and the progress all pupils make, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, and act quickly and decisively where improvement is needed
 - performance management is used to drive improvement in teaching, accelerate pupils' progress and hold teachers and leaders more rigorously to account
 - pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported and promoted consistently well.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and increase the progress pupils make, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able, by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used effectively by teachers to plan learning activities which are closely matched to pupils' interests and levels of ability
 - teachers follow the school's policy for marking and giving feedback to pupils.

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 pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 May 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's system for measuring pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and behaviour records. The inspection team met with the principal, the two deputy headteachers, a group of pupils, a group of staff, a group of middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous inspection, three members of staff have left. Two middle leaders have been appointed, one as head of the primary part of the school and the second to lead the behaviour team. A further middle leader with a responsibility for directly improving the quality of teaching and learning has been appointed and is to take up post in July 2017.

An external review of governance took place in February and an external review of pupil premium funding has also recently taken place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have been successful at improving the effectiveness of safeguarding within school. The deputy headteacher appointed in September has taken on the role of safeguarding lead and has taken a highly methodical approach to bringing about significant changes to previous systems. For example, the deputy headteacher initially instigated a paper-based system in order to ensure that safeguarding concerns were recorded securely. This has now been replaced by an online system which is accessed by all staff. Further changes have included a raft of safeguarding training for all staff, which has ensured that they now have a clear understanding of current requirements. Discussions with staff confirmed their confidence in how to make a referral. Analysis of current entries made online demonstrated high levels of skills and understanding by staff.

The relevant details of all staff and governors are recorded accurately on the single central register which now meets legislative requirements.

School leaders made the decision to combine the school development plan with the action plan. At the start of the inspection, while it was clear that school leaders were aware of the priorities by which actions were being taken, it was not clear to the inspection team. It was also not easy, on the format used, for leaders to identify clearly when an action had been fully completed. The two separate plans produced by the leadership team before the end of the inspection gave a much clearer picture and timeline for improvement. Leaders agreed that this action would also assist

newly appointed staff to develop a clear understanding of past and future progress quickly.

The school's progress towards bringing about further improvement to the quality of teaching and learning has been slower. This is partly because leaders rightly initially focused on developing effective safeguarding processes and procedures. However, a further hindrance to the speed of improvement has been the lack of input by senior leaders to the process. An imaginative and highly positive system has been put in place, which includes staff evaluation of their peers. However, little formal monitoring by senior leaders has taken place. Consequently, slower progress has been made.

Discussions with the chair of the governing body demonstrated the positive effect that the review of governance has had on the governing body. The chair, who has been in post for a relatively short period of time, described how it had empowered him to implement changes in the function and role governors took, for example in challenging senior leaders. His passion for bringing about change and empowering governance was encapsulated well in the governors' new mantras that: 'A silent chair might as well be empty' and 'There is no such thing as a silly question.' The governing body's clear focus on improving safeguarding practice by the implementation of regular meetings has played a significant part in bringing about the required changes overall.

Senior leaders have put in place a new system for monitoring pupils' progress. This has enabled staff to develop a more accurate understanding of pupils' starting points and progress. However, it does not yet effectively clearly identify and measure outcomes for different groups, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils.

While a performance management system is in place, links to the school development plan are not yet secure because the school development plan has only recently been put in place. Therefore, current progress towards improvement in this area is not yet discernible.

An external review of pupil premium funding has just been completed. The report had arrived in school just prior to the inspection. Therefore leaders had had too little time to analyse its findings and put in place relevant changes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed during the inspection remains inconsistent. Pockets of good practice were clearly observable. However, overall, slower progress has been sustained over the last six months compared with progress in other areas. Observations in classrooms and work in pupils' books confirmed this.

The quality of learning in the post-16 unit is a strength. The imaginative curriculum on offer engages pupils well. It includes furniture restoration and an enterprise unit. In contrast, provision in the early years lacks excitement and a curriculum which is planned effectively. This is in part due to temporary staff changes. This confirms that, overall, improvement has been slower in the early years.

Staff are becoming more reflective. They are using assessment more effectively to ascertain pupils' starting points and monitor progress. Leaders are aware that more work is needed for this to be fully established and to start to accelerate pupils' progress overall.

School leaders do have further plans for improvement. These plans include the appointment of an assistant headteacher to oversee the improvements required in the quality of teaching and learning. It is planned that this role will include a direct approach including modelling good and better teaching.

The curriculum is under development particularly in the primary section of the school. School leaders are working on this area of improvement. Curriculum enrichment activities, including outdoor activities, are increasing pupils' enjoyment of school and their development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has put in place a new marking and feedback policy recently which enables pupils, simply and effectively, to recognise what they need to do to improve. It has not yet been fully implemented across the school. This is reducing its effectiveness and slowing the rate of improvement for some pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour is now more closely tracked and monitored with the implementation of an online system. Staff now give a severity rating to all incidents and this information is fed back to governors. Staff are trained effectively to deal with more severe behaviour. All physical interventions are recorded. However, many of these systems are new and as yet it is not possible to measure the impact this closer analysis is having on reducing incidents overall.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is largely dependent on the quality of teaching and learning. Where well-planned activities are set which closely match the needs of pupils, behaviour is often calmer and more conducive to learning. Where teaching is weaker and activities do not match pupils' needs, learning slows and behaviour dips.

Pupils spoken to confirmed this with comments such as: 'Behaviour isn't always good in lessons and sometimes that stops us learning.'

Attendance remains close to the national average and school leaders remain committed to ensuring that no pupil is permanently excluded.

Outcomes for pupils

The new tracking system which has recently been put in place has enabled leaders to start to monitor progress more effectively. As a result, progress made by pupils is now more consistently used by teaching staff to plan further work. However, the school has yet to monitor the progress of the most able pupils. This lack of focus on this group makes it difficult to ascertain their progress over time. Observations in classrooms and a scrutiny in pupils' books suggested that this group are not always given work which was sufficiently challenging. Consequently, this slows their progress overall.

The school has produced recent data in support of their spending of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. This information suggests that last year, gaps for this group and others were closing. However, this year's data suggests that there is less consistency and that progress is less good for disadvantaged pupils in some year groups. School leaders are aware that this needs to be addressed.

External support

Despite being an academy, the local authority has provided the school with support since the last inspection. For example, links have been formed with local schools. This has enabled staff to visit and gain experience of expectations in a mainstream setting. The local authority has also put in place links with a national leader in learning who has offered assistance to the school to bring about improvement. The virtual headteacher responsible for children looked after has also worked with the school. This is to ensure the quality of provision for pupils in the care of the local authority.