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Mr Haydn Pearse
Caradon Alternative Provision Academy
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Dear Mr Pearse

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Caradon Alternative Provision Academy

Following my visit to your school on 25 September 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

The school should take further action to:

- secure further improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the primary key stages and in science
- ensure that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, receive good levels of challenge so that they are able to reach their full potential
- ensure that everyone in the school community is focused on the current improvement priorities
- ensure that the monitoring activities included within the action plan are clear so that governors are able to check the impact of these activities on outcomes for pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. We looked at learning in classes across the school and looked in pupils' books to evaluate the progress they are making. I met with subject leaders and reviewed their action plans and pupils' progress information. I met with a parent to discuss her views. I also met with the school's improvement adviser. I scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding, including records of physical intervention.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been several staff changes. There have been some long-term absences of key members of staff, which has resulted in progress since the previous inspection being slower than you would have liked. A new vice-principal started last year and there is a new teacher in the primary phase. The staffing situation is now more stable and you are in a strong position to move forward at pace.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection you, your governors and the trust have been determined to make the changes needed in order for the school to become solidly good. You have rightly focused on improving assessment systems across the school in order to ensure that teachers have clear information about what pupils know, can do and understand. You have also introduced a new system to track and check the progress every pupil is making throughout the year and across subjects. You have worked with other schools across the trust to ensure that the assessments that teachers make are in line with others and therefore you can be confident that information is accurate and useful.

Teachers now have secure information that helps them to plan lessons that more closely match the learning needs of pupils. As a result, more pupils are starting to make faster progress across the school. Subject leaders are using the pupil tracking system effectively for English and mathematics in order to identify pupils who need extra help to make better progress. These subject leaders are ensuring that the extra support given to pupils is adapted to pupils' needs. As a result, more pupils are making the progress they should.

In lessons and around the school during the day, relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are motivated to try hard. We observed this in lessons. Pupils told me that they enjoy and appreciate times such as celebration assemblies, where you reward them for good attendance and for trying their best.

You have successfully raised expectations across the school, holding teachers

robustly to account for the progress their pupils are making. You also ensure that teachers are provided with good guidance and support. You are aware that this work needs to continue so that the quality of teaching is consistently good across different year groups and across subjects. Work in books shows that it more frequently builds on what pupils can do and helps them to move forward in their learning. Where teaching is most effective, pupils frequently have the guidance they need to move forward with their learning and to succeed.

The action plan that you created following the inspection has helped to provide a clear pathway for improvement and includes some actions that are now completed. For example, the school's website now includes up-to-date policies and information. Subject leaders now have plans in place that include actions to develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Your current priority for improvement is to continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that pupils of differing abilities and starting points are challenged to make even better progress. You want to make sure that teachers plan work that has sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. You are aware that this priority needs to be understood by all, so that other improvement plans link with this work. Governors and the trust have been fully involved with checking the impact of the developments in the action plan. We discussed ways of making aspects of the plan even clearer for governors so that they can more easily check the impact that improvements are making on outcomes for pupils.

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The trust has been rigorous in ensuring that concerns raised regarding safeguarding practices have been thoroughly investigated and explored. The trust has commissioned several reviews and audits of safeguarding, behaviour and governance arrangements. Action plans have been put in place following these reviews and appropriate steps taken to ensure that any lessons learned are thoroughly followed up with actions to improve practice and procedures. The culture of safeguarding is strong. Staff are aware of how to report concerns. Training takes place, which includes the wider aspects of safeguarding such as keeping children safe from exploitation. Leaders follow up training events with updates and discussions with staff to ensure that messages from training become part of everyday practice.

You ensure that there is rigorous analysis of incidents that take place in school in order to look for patterns that can inform and improve your safeguarding procedures and practices. All incidents are carefully analysed and lessons learned appropriately. Your analysis shows that the use of physical restraint is reducing. Such incidents are recorded appropriately by staff. You agreed that the discussions with pupils, staff and parents following such incidents also needs to be recorded so that similar analysis of the effectiveness and impact of such activities can take place.

External support

While not being external, it is the support from the trust that has been instrumental in ensuring that you and your staff have received consistent advice and effective guidance. A range of expertise is provided by the trust, including leadership and governance support, as well as subject-specialist help for teachers. The trust has also ensured that the impact of support is carefully checked during frequent visits from a school improvement adviser. The adviser provides guidance and training on aspects of school improvement, including the analysis of the progress that pupils make. This has helped to add rigour to your evaluation of the strengths and priorities for the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson

Her Majesty's Inspector