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Mr Damon Hewson, Principal
CTC Kingshurst Academy
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West Midlands
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Dear Mr Hewson

Special measures monitoring inspection of CTC Kingshurst Academy

Following my visit with Bianka Zemke, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Thomas Walton, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 17– 18 October 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 March 2017.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs). I would ask that I be informed of any decisions that may result in the appointment of NQTs before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Solihull. This letter will be

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017

- Improve teaching, especially in mathematics and science, so that pupils make good progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - use information about what pupils already understand, know and can do to plan activities that are well matched to their ability
 - develop pupils’ deep understanding of the topics being studied
 - use information about pupils’ special educational needs to plan activities that help them to learn
 - have consistently high expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils produce in lessons
 - consistently deal with low-level disruption.
- Improve attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - identifying the reasons why pupils are failing to attend school regularly
 - carefully evaluating the strategies currently being used to improve attendance to identify why they are being unsuccessful
 - implementing strategies that are well targeted at overcoming the reasons that some pupils are failing to attend.
- Improve leadership by:
 - evaluating all improvement strategies to determine the impact that each is having and using this information to sharpen future plans
 - regularly checking the quality of teaching and targeting training at subjects, aspects and individuals where it is needed
 - providing teachers with timely and effective support in eliminating low-level disruption in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, but who do not have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, receive high-quality support
 - ensuring that the pupil premium funding is well focused on accelerating the progress of all disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management might be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 17 October 2017 to 18 October 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and held meetings with the principal, other leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with those who have recently started to provide external support to the school.

Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Leaders accompanied them on some visits to lessons. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them in class. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at social times. An inspector met pupils formally on two occasions.

A range of documents were evaluated, including leaders' analysis of recent examination outcomes, behaviour and attendance. Additional documentation was evaluated, including the school's statement of action and action plans, and reports of visits conducted by external consultants.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes of senior leaders' roles and responsibilities. A number of teachers left the school this year, including some who had been absent from the school for some time. Leaders were able to successfully appoint replacements, and the school was fully staffed at the start of this term. There are eight newly qualified teachers. The governing body has created an impact committee to monitor and evaluate the progress that the school is making in the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Leaders and governors have very recently identified a well-regarded and successful local multi-academy trust as a school improvement partner. Leaders have also commissioned several other external consultants to evaluate certain aspects of the school's provision, including attendance and teaching and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have responded to the previous inspection and started to address the areas for improvement. A great many projects and developments have been started which have reviewed previous systems and established procedural changes. Leaders have spent less time, so far, on developing structures to robustly measure and evaluate the impact of some of these changes. In addition, some developments are focused on refining practice, while there is still some work to be done in establishing routines.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding took place earlier this term. The report identified that previous approaches to address the barriers

faced by disadvantaged pupils were too wide ranging, and some actions were slow to be implemented. Leaders have responded positively and promptly to the external review. Strategic plans have been revised and reflect the recommendations made. Leaders are clear that detailed and accurate evaluation is required in order to ascertain the effectiveness of their actions and inform future plans. However, success criteria still lack sufficient clarity for evaluation to be fully meaningful.

Leadership for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently being restructured. Leaders now place greater emphasis on analysing pupils' progress. Leaders have taken action to improve the way in which staff support in lessons those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional training has taken place and changes have been made to the way in which information about pupils' learning needs is shared with staff. Teachers now know these pupils well and can plan lessons that focus more closely on their individual learning needs. Pupils said that they feel better supported during lessons. This support is still inconsistent across the school.

Leaders have introduced new systems to collect information about how well pupils are doing. There is now a consistent approach to the way in which such information will be recorded and analysed. Leaders expect this new practice to provide clear information about how well different groups of pupils are doing and how different subjects are performing. Leaders have plans in place that will enable them to check the validity of the assessment information that teachers record, but it is too soon to evaluate the success of this system.

Governors have completed an audit of their skills since the previous inspection. Some new members of the governing body have been appointed. Additional focused training has started to address shortfalls in some skills identified by the audit. Governors understand the school's current weaknesses and know what actions leaders have taken. Governors have convened an impact committee to evaluate the school's progress in light of the previous inspection. The impact committee is not currently holding leaders to account for their actions because its outcomes are not clearly communicated. For example, minutes of its meetings were not available to leaders or inspectors. Leaders and governors must urgently address this failing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching because they regularly monitor lessons. Leaders can identify accurately where effective learning is taking place and communicate their evaluation of lessons to teachers. Leaders have changed the way that pupil attainment targets are set, to communicate their increased expectations of what pupils should achieve. As this is a relatively recent change, it is too early for leaders to judge the success of this approach.

Teachers receive detailed information about pupils' prior attainment and their

learning needs. This information is being used with varying degrees of success to plan lessons that take into account pupils' starting points. Plans to challenge pupils with higher targets are less effective when learning tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Sometimes, pupils are expected to complete too many easier tasks before moving on to more challenging work. During lessons, teachers take opportunities to review how well pupils are doing. However, not all staff use this information to inform the direction of the lesson. Consequently, pupils' ongoing needs are not consistently addressed, which limits their progress.

In some lessons, pupils are able to recall recent prior learning and use this to build on their knowledge and extend their understanding. For example, during the inspection, in a science lesson, pupils explained what factors could affect the rate of photosynthesis by using what they previously knew about this process. Currently, teachers are not able to effectively engage and motivate enough pupils to participate in their learning. As a result, in too many lessons, pupils are unable to recall enough previous work to build on their learning. Pupils have not yet been sufficiently supported to improve their low levels of concentration and motivation. These are barriers to improving their learning. For example, during the inspection, some pupils in mathematics questioned the purpose and value of their work. Staff and pupils stated that there have been some improvements in pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. Staff use the positive relationships they have with some pupils to encourage and motivate them well. For example, students in the sixth form commented on the positive relationships they have with their teachers. Leaders know that these improvements must be accelerated and sustained in order for other improvements in teaching to be effective and benefit pupils' outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance. A range of strategies are now routinely used to support pupils' attendance, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include rewarding pupils whose attendance is improving, greater involvement of parents and promptly checking the whereabouts of pupils who are absent from school. Leaders' careful and regular analysis of patterns of attendance demonstrates the success of these approaches. Overall rates of attendance have improved since last year, although still remain too low, and absence has reduced by one third. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has almost halved. Leaders have also successfully started to reduce pupils' lateness to school.

Leaders have begun to improve pupils' behaviour. This is, in part, a result of the determination of leaders and staff to hold pupils to account for their actions. This is supported when staff correctly use the school's behaviour policy. Pupils are increasingly aware of what is expected of them. They are also beginning to understand that they are responsible for their own behaviour and actions. The frequency of more serious behavioural problems has declined. There are fewer

exclusions from the school, and there has been a reduction in the number of times senior staff are required to respond to behavioural concerns in lessons. Staff said that behaviour is better and that they feel more supported by leaders to tackle conduct that does not meet expectations. Pupils also feel that behaviour is improving, but said that there are differences in standards in lessons and at social times.

The prevalence of low-level behavioural problems remains too high. This includes pupils not participating in learning, taking too long to respond to teachers' instructions and interrupting the learning of others. There is still a great deal of work to be done to eliminate low-level disruption in lessons. High rates of staff absence in the past have led to inconsistency of expectations and insufficient rigour when following up concerns. Leaders clearly reinforce their expectations of how staff should approach these behavioural concerns and how they should record their actions. Staff are still not consistently applying some aspects of this policy. Leaders are now collecting information about the prevalence of low-level behaviour and so will be able to judge the impact of strategies to tackle this aspect of poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Initial analysis of outcomes for 2017 suggests that Year 11 pupils' progress was very low. There was a decline in the proportion of pupils achieving good GCSE grades in English and mathematics and in a range of other subjects, compared to the previous year. One in five pupils achieved the English Baccalaureate, although twice as many were entered for this qualification. There was some success in vocational sports, engineering and GCSE technology qualifications. However, there were only relatively small numbers of pupils on these courses.

Analysis shows that the use of the pupil premium funding did not have a positive impact on the academic outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. They made less progress than their peers in English and in a wide range of subjects. However, disadvantaged pupils made marginally more progress in mathematics than their peers. The most able pupils also did not perform well in 2017. They made almost one and one-quarter grade less progress than similar pupils nationally, although these results are not yet fully validated.

Previous curriculum decisions have resulted in too few pupils studying sufficient qualifications in subjects that prepare them well for the next steps of their education or training. For example, two in five pupils did not complete enough qualifications to contribute fully to the government's performance measures in 2017. Leaders have made changes to the school's curriculum and options process. Key stage four pupils currently at the school are studying an appropriate number of qualifications.

A different strategy to support younger pupils who need to catch up with their literacy and numeracy skills has been introduced this year. Leaders evaluate that

this new provision is well suited to the starting points of these pupils. They recognise that it is too soon to assess the impact of this strategy on pupils' progress.

External support

Leaders have commissioned several sources of external support. For example, a review of pupils' attendance supported leaders to identify reasons why some groups of pupils were attending less regularly than others. This work has supported subsequent actions to successfully reduce pupils' absence levels. External consultants' reports identify where some progress has been made to improve aspects of the school. Reports also highlight where actions have not been effective. However, recommendations from a variety of different sources do not effectively support leaders to prioritise their work, and sometimes provide conflicting advice.

More recently, leaders have commissioned the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (ATLP) as an external school improvement partner. School leaders are highly positive and optimistic about this arrangement. Two senior leaders from ATLP now work alongside school leaders and are determining the priorities for their work. Work is now under way to identify where additional expertise from ATLP will be used to support improvements at the school. School leaders are keen to establish how ATLP can support the review, evaluation and challenge of actions taken in response to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Two specialist leaders of education have started to support staff in mathematics and science.

Priorities for further improvement

- Make sure that targets are focused more on pupils' outcomes and devise a clear programme of opportunities to check the success of actions taken, ensuring that outcomes of which are shared effectively.
- Establish effective links with the new school improvement partner.