

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Clare Cassidy
Headteacher
Sedgehill School
Sedgehill Road
London
SE6 3QW

Dear Ms Cassidy

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sedgehill School

Following my visit with Sarah Parker, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Heidi Swidenbank, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 22 and 23 November 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2016. 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's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The school works in partnership with the United Learning Group and Lewisham local authority. It therefore has the capacity to support newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lewisham. This

letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2016

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all staff have clear knowledge and understanding of statutory safeguarding guidance
 - immediate steps are taken to ensure that all pupils feel safe in and around school
 - staff are well supported to follow and implement new policies, procedures and expectations set by the chief executive officer and her leadership team
 - all leaders are accurate in checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and provide challenge and support where it is inadequate.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations for learning and set more challenging work so all pupils, including the most able, make good progress
 - learners in the sixth form achieve well in academic and vocational subjects
 - those who have special educational needs or disability, and other underperforming groups, make good and sustained progress.

- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - eradicating poor and wilfully disruptive behaviour in lessons and around school
 - improving the attendance of all pupils, including learners in the sixth form
 - significantly reducing the number of exclusions.

- Improve the outcomes of pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils' achievement in mathematics and other underperforming subjects improves rapidly
 - all pupils make good or better progress throughout key stage 3
 - learners' achievement in the sixth form improves for academic subjects
 - more learners in the sixth form continue their studies from Year 12 to Year 13.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 November 2017

Evidence

During the monitoring visit, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke to members of the interim executive board (IEB). Inspectors visited a number of lessons, the majority of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. They heard pupils read during lessons. Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and during lessons, recreational times and at the end of the school day. They also spoke informally to staff at the school. Inspectors analysed policies for safeguarding, the single central record (showing the checks made on the suitability of staff to work at the school), and information kept by the school. Inspectors considered the school's plan to address issues identified at the previous inspection and actions to date.

The particular focus of this monitoring visit was on the effectiveness of leadership and management to address the issues identified at the previous inspection.

Context

In September 2017, a formal partnership was created between United Learning Group and Lewisham local authority. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by an executive headteacher, all from United Learning Group, were appointed to lead the school.

The school remains a local authority maintained community school. However, the partnership arrangement means that the school benefits from both local authority and United Learning Group support. As a result, there is leadership capacity to make necessary school improvements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since September 2017, the executive headteacher and headteacher have made rapid improvements that have had a positive impact on the ethos and culture of the school. They have accurately assessed areas requiring immediate attention and put in place effective actions to address them. Leaders at all levels share their high ambitions for the school and its pupils and are committed to making the necessary changes. They have a realistic understanding of the scale of the task and the challenges they face. Leaders have created the '100 day plan' that encapsulates the key priorities for the school, with identified actions and measurable outcomes. Their focus on improving behaviour, teaching and learning, and pupils' progress has already begun to have an impact. Staff are highly positive about the changes and are equally dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for the pupils at Sedgemoor School. Consequently, there is a shared aspiration to continue to make significant changes, which will benefit the whole school community.

The newly formed IEB cements the partnership between United Learning, the school and the local authority. They fully support the implementation of the '100 day plan' and are clear about their assigned roles and responsibilities. The members are suitably experienced and therefore able to sufficiently challenge and hold school leaders to account.

Middle leaders are highly complimentary about the 'transformational' changes that have taken place since September 2017. They work closely together and with senior leaders to ensure that the focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' attitudes to learning, is the highest priority. They are clear about their role in delivering the actions identified in the '100 day plan'. Middle leaders welcome the professional development opportunities now available as part of the partnership working with United Learning and the local authority. Together, middle and senior leaders have created a positive culture for sharing best practice and supporting those teachers who are less experienced or confident.

Safeguarding arrangements are now effective and in line with statutory requirements. Since September, leaders have quickly put in place policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They have repeated the checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school, to ensure that all information held is comprehensive. Staff have received up-to-date training, including on the 'Prevent' duty. They understand their responsibility to be vigilant in keeping pupils safe and know how to share information in a timely and appropriate way. All are well aware of the dangers facing pupils in the community, including child sexual exploitation, gang affiliation and knife crime. Pupils are given relevant information and guidance on how they can keep themselves safe both in school and in the wider community. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that early help is offered to pupils and their families as and when the need arises. Safeguarding concerns identified at the previous inspection and the first monitoring visit have now been addressed.

Leaders have rightly prioritised the sixth-form provision as an area requiring urgent attention. They have correctly identified the need to review and develop 16 to 19 study programmes to ensure that they retain more students and enable them to make good progress from their starting points.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. They have implemented a systematic approach to teaching across all subject areas, called 'The Sedgehill Lesson Cycle'. Each lesson, pupils receive activities that help them to 'connect, activate, demonstrate and consolidate'. As a result, pupils are more engaged in their learning and keen to make progress.

Senior and middle leaders now regularly visit lessons to ensure that the quality of teaching enables pupils to make progress. They have instigated a programme of support for those needing to develop their teaching skills further. There are regular opportunities for teachers to share their expertise and knowledge. This includes working with subject specialists from across United Learning and visiting other schools. As a result, there is now a more consistent approach to teaching across the school, well supported by subject experts. However, leaders know that the quality of teaching across subjects is still too variable, particularly in those areas where recruitment has proved difficult. Hence, improving teaching and learning remains a significant priority.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

School leaders have rightly focused on rapidly improving pupils' behaviour around the site and in lessons. They have put in place clear routines and structures for pupils as well as protocols for managing behaviour. As a result, pupils are now welcomed into the new school day in a calm line up. Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones on the premises. Pupils are encouraged to respect each other and conduct themselves in a way that creates a safe place for everyone. Positive behaviour is rewarded and there are clear sanctions in place for those not able to abide by the new school rules. Pupils spoke of how calm the school now is and the significant changes that have happened since September.

The recently introduced 'DFL' approach ('disruption free learning') is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Teachers' higher expectations and clear guidelines ensure that pupils understand how they should behave in lessons. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour in lessons are reducing. Pupils were unanimous in their praise for this new system and the impact it is having on their learning. As one pupil said: 'Last year it wasn't that good. But now the teachers help so much more because there isn't disruption and you can learn.'

Leaders have worked hard to address poor attendance. They have introduced systems to track and monitor carefully those pupils who attend less regularly, working closely with external agencies. Pupils say that they feel safer in school, due to improvements in pupils' conduct around the school site. This, plus an extensive rewards system, has encouraged more pupils to attend regularly. As a result, overall attendance is now above the national average. However, leaders know that the attendance of some pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, remains low. They are carefully monitoring individuals and working closely with their families to encourage them to attend more often.

Outcomes for pupils

Since September, leaders at all levels have reviewed the accuracy of pupils' in-year assessment information. Consequently, they are currently re-assessing all pupils so that they can set aspirational yet achievable targets. The accuracy of teachers'

assessment is now routinely checked. Pupils' work is now checked against work produced in other schools in the trust to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. Information about pupils' progress is, therefore, more reliable and informs teachers' planning.

Leaders have identified that poor literacy is having a detrimental effect on pupils' progress and plans are being developed to focus on improving pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

School leaders have prioritised improving the progress and attainment of the current Year 11. They have implemented a range of initiatives to ensure that Year 11 pupils catch up on any gaps in their learning and make accelerated progress this year. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked and regularly assessed. Where necessary, pupils are provided with targeted support, including one-to-one tuition and small-group sessions. As a result, Year 11 pupils report that they feel well supported and know what they need to do to achieve well in their GCSE examinations.

External support

The partnership agreement between United Learning Group and Lewisham local authority provides capacity and support, which is brokered by the executive headteacher to ensure that it is targeted effectively. United Learning provides a range of services including subject-specific advisers, meetings to moderate assessments, a business manager, central office functions and advice on safeguarding policy and procedures. Lewisham local authority provides a range of support through the 'Lewisham Challenge', as well as advice from the human resources, payroll and safeguarding teams. The IEB includes representatives from both United Learning Group and the local authority.