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24 January 2018

Mr Glen Allott
Principal
Wayland Academy Norfolk
Merton Road
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Dear Mr Allott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wayland Academy Norfolk

Following my visit with Helen Loughran, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 10 and 11 January 2018, 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 academy'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 April 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 not fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, the chair of the board of trustees, the executive principal of the academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - reducing the incidents of bullying and eradicating pupils' use of homophobic and derogatory language
 - ensuring that pupils have a secure understanding of the dangers of radicalism and extremism, so that risks posed towards them by those with extreme values or beliefs are minimised
 - reviewing the procedures used to manage pupils' attendance, and ensuring that pupils' absence, particularly persistent absence, is tackled effectively so that the attendance of all groups of pupils rises to at least the national average
 - analysing with governors the impact of the ways in which pupil premium funding is being used to support disadvantaged pupils, so that resources can be allocated in the most effective manner.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan learning so that it meets the needs of different pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - follow the school's behaviour policy consistently, so that the incidents of disruption to teaching and learning reduce
 - insist that all pupils complete well-presented work to the best of their ability
 - address the errors that pupils make in spelling, punctuation and the use of grammar, so that they are able to write with increasing accuracy and confidence.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 January 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you and other senior leaders, middle leaders responsible for monitoring behaviour and attendance, two groups of pupils, the executive principal of the academy trust and a representative of the academy council. Together with you and your deputy, we observed pupils at work in lessons. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in English.

Context

Since the previous inspection, you have reorganised your team of senior leaders and broadened the team by including faculty leaders to add further capacity to lead improvements. Two new teachers have joined this year and the school is fully staffed. A member of staff has been appointed as attendance officer to monitor attendance and oversee improvements. The number of pupils on roll has fallen slightly to 555 pupils.

Following the retirement of its chief executive officer, the trust appointed a new executive principal who took up her new role on January 2018 to oversee the performance of all schools within the trust. The trust was issued with a termination warning notice by the Department for Education in July 2017. Further discussions between the trust board and the regional schools commissioner regarding this matter are planned for March 2018.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Ofsted's monitoring inspection in November 2017 of the school's safeguarding arrangements found all aspects to be effective. The improvements noted included much greater emphasis placed on reducing bullying and ensuring that pupils had full confidence in staff to help them resolve any issues should they arise. A range of initiatives and events held in school had led to a reduction in incidents of pupils using abusive, homophobic language. Behaviour in and outside of classrooms was much calmer and pupils felt safe in school.

Since then, you have built on this further by prioritising more improvements to pupils' behaviour and safety. Expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves and how staff should manage behaviour in lessons have been raised. Pupils' behaviour is monitored carefully by leaders, teachers and support staff. However, the procedures to record and analyse incidents of poor behaviour are not collated centrally, and lack coherence. This prevents your leadership team from building up a clear overview of the types of misbehaviour, where it occurs and which groups of pupils it involves, and then using this information to inform your actions for improvement.

Your plans for improvement are suitably prioritised and identify clearly the roles and responsibilities of all leaders in making improvements. The statement of action submitted to Ofsted in September 2017 lacked precision and did not make it clear enough how improvements will be measured. Your amended plans still do not have clear targets to measure the full impact of your work.

The recent monitoring inspection also noted the developing roles of middle leaders in leading and monitoring improvements. Your wider leadership team meets weekly to review the progress made in resolving the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Increasingly, they are taking more responsibility for leading improvements to teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance, and for monitoring the progress made by pupils within their faculty areas.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium was carried out shortly after the previous inspection. It identified what was working well and what needed changing to ensure that additional funding is allocated in the most effective manner. Funding is now used to accelerate the reading skills of pupils in key stage 3, monitor the behaviour and attendance of disadvantaged pupils and provide a range of interventions that boost pupils' attainment and progress, and raise their aspirations. Your spending plans are detailed and suitably focused, but some priorities lack hard, measurable targets to hold all staff accountable for making improvements.

An external review of governance has been carried out since the previous inspection. This provided the academy council with a much clearer understanding of its role in aiding improvement. It also provided systematic procedures for governors to follow to manage and record information discussed in their meetings. Minutes of their recent meetings show that governors are not yet asking you and your senior leaders enough challenging questions about the rate of improvements being made to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, particularly the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Our observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that progress has been made in gaining consistency to the management of behaviour. We found no incidents of unacceptable or disruptive behaviour in lessons or around the school. Pupils recognise the improvements being made. They feel that the rewards and sanctions used by staff to manage behaviour work and are leading to improvements, but they are undermined by a minority of teachers who do not apply them consistently in lessons.

Your own records, and the views of pupils, suggest that more needs to be done to eradicate fully some disruptive behaviour in lessons. The proportions of pupils given a 'red card' and removed from lessons, or placed in isolation, due to their poor attitudes or behaviour have fallen significantly compared to last year but remain too

high.

The 'Wayland Guarantee' sets out clearly your expectations of teachers and the procedures they need to follow to plan learning. There are clear signs of growing consistency. For example, most teachers have seating plans that identify the different needs and backgrounds of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Bronze, silver and gold tasks are planned to provide pupils of different abilities with suitably challenging work to do. Lessons begin with a starter activity and pupils' learning is summarised in a plenary at the end of each lesson. This is adding further consistency to teaching but is not yet fully established. Staff understand how to plan different tasks but not how to apply them. We found that invariably, more able pupils end up doing basic bronze and silver challenges, which are too easy for them.

Some progress has been made in improving the quality of pupils' presentation. 'Proud', leaders' raised expectations of pupils' work are listed in the front of pupils' books. Increasingly, pupils are using rulers to underline, writing in pen, drawing in pencil or not scribbling out errors. However, some teachers do not apply these expectations consistently, and consequently the quality of all pupils' work is not improving. This is particularly noticeable in boys' work which often shows a lack of pride. Their poor-quality or unfinished work is not challenged by teachers. Common errors in spelling, punctuation and the use of grammar are not corrected systematically. When errors are identified, pupils are not always expected to follow them up. A revised marking policy has been introduced this term to improve this but needs much more time to become firmly established.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The school has a positive, purposeful ethos. A programme of 'welfare days' using tutorial time, assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons in key stage 3 focus effectively on raising pupils' awareness of bullying, keeping safe and avoiding the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. High-quality posters in corridors and classrooms help to sharpen pupils' understanding of these issues, and inform them of who to contact should they be affected by them.

Pupils told us that they feel very safe, and that there are far fewer incidents of bullying. When asked, they said they could approach the 'safe team' or any member of staff who would listen to them and follow up their concerns. Incidents are carefully logged and, at a later date, followed up to check that they remain fully resolved. Pupils are contributing to these improvements by sharing with staff their views about the improvements they would like to see. The introduction of Pupils Advising, Listening and Supporting (PALS) is working. These pupils take their roles seriously and can point to clear examples of how they have helped younger pupils by listening to and acting upon their concerns.

Your attendance officer is leading improvements. Relentless chasing up of pupils

absent from school and rewards for regular attendance are making a difference. Overall attendance is rising. Currently, it is higher than it was at this time last year, and is closer to the national average. You acknowledge that much more needs to be done to reduce the persistent absence of key groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Although persistent absence rates have fallen, they remain far too high for these two groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Inconsistent teaching continues to lead to variable rates of pupils' progress. The most able pupils are not fully stretched. We found that tasks are often too easy. A lack of clear timescales for pupils to complete work promptly leads to steady, rather than good, progress. In most classes, the quality and quantity of girls' work is usually much better than that of boys.

When asked, older pupils said they are making improved progress this year. They feel that they are doing better because there are fewer distractions in lessons as behaviour is managed more effectively. Interventions to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics are under way and they appreciate the additional support sessions provided for them after school. The accelerated reader programme continues to make an effective contribution to improving the reading skills of pupils in Years 7 and 8.

You, your senior leaders and the trust recognise that overall outcomes in 2017 were not high enough. Gains in pupils' attainment were not matched by their improved progress. Increasing the overall progress made by pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, remains a top priority for the school.

External support

An interim executive board set up by the trust to oversee the school's improvement remains in place. The trust has commissioned additional consultancy this term to review the school's work and provide further challenge and support for leaders.

Priorities for further improvement

- Amend the statement of action by adding clear targets to enable leaders to measure the full impact of their work to improve the school. This should be submitted to Ofsted before the next monitoring inspection.