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Mr Nick Giles
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Dear Mr Giles

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chamberlayne College for the Arts

Following my visit with Neil Strowger, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 12–13 March 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 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 2017. 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 up to three newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection, one in each of the English, performing arts and humanities departments.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children’s services for Southampton. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lucy English

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management to raise achievement and improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that:
 - leaders have the skills and capacity to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate improvements in the areas for which they are responsible
 - leaders raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science as well as across all other subjects
 - governors challenge leaders more urgently on the attendance and achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching, especially for those pupils that are disadvantaged and/or need to catch up with their literacy and numeracy skills in Year 7.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what disadvantaged pupils, boys, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able pupils, and most-able disadvantaged pupils can do and can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers develop the skills and expertise to fully support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - planning learning activities that meet pupils' needs and match their starting points
 - ensuring that teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning and adapt tasks appropriately
 - increasing pupils' experiences of writing for a variety of purposes
 - improving the standards of pupils' presentation, spelling and grammatical skills
 - ensuring that lessons are free from low-level disruptive behaviour.

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

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 12 March 2018 to 13 March 2018

Evidence

The main areas of focus for the visit were to evaluate leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and to consider how effectively leaders were improving attendance. However, other areas for improvement from the last inspection were also considered. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of staff and pupils. They also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with the local authority school improvement officer. They visited lessons across the school, mostly jointly with school leaders, in order to observe learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. They also worked alongside three leaders to review a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents and information, including school and department improvement plans, monitoring reports from the local authority, current outcomes information and attendance information. They also examined leaders' recruitment checks on staff and information relating to safeguarding.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has left and another middle leader has joined the school in this role. One other teacher and three members of the support staff have left. Two teachers of science have joined. The school has now been issued with an academy order by the regional schools commissioner, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and governors have continued the journey of improvement that they established before the section 5 inspection. They are determined to ensure that these improvements are secure and sustained, and have prioritised their work well. They recognise that there is still much to be achieved, but they have secured a notable shift in culture with raised aspirations and expectations from all in the school community. Pupils talk very positively about the difference they see 'every day' at school, especially regarding the greatly improved behaviour and learning.

The headteacher, ably supported by his leadership team, has continued to drive improvement. He provides determined and, what a classroom teacher described as 'inspirational', support and challenge to all staff to improve the overall provision for pupils. Leaders continue to show moral purpose and commitment for this school and its community.

The associate headteacher has planned and implemented the professional development programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning very well.

Teachers are extremely positive about the difference that this programme of training and support has made to improve their own practice. Inspectors' observations found that the quality of teaching is improving overall. The structures and resources provided through this development programme have helped to generate this improvement. The good leadership of this work is behind its success: leaders have used their own accurate analysis of the needs of teachers and pupils to prioritise and shape the programme. It is effective due to their well-judged decisions. Leaders' accurate understanding of the overall quality of teaching means they are only too aware of the need to continue with this work. They are determined to make sure that this improvement is sustained and secured across the school.

Middle leaders are developing their skills effectively. Senior leaders support them well through coaching in order to ensure that they hold their teams to account. They also benefit from well-considered commissioning of external support, including that from the local authority.

Trainee teachers from the Teach First programme are supported very well and are making good progress with their development. Teachers who were newly qualified at the time of the previous inspection have also been supported well to start their careers successfully.

Governors remain committed to the school and articulate the same moral purpose as embodied by school leaders. They are acutely aware that current pupils only have one experience of secondary education and they are determined that this should be improved as quickly as possible. They are aware of the need to be strategic with the process of school improvement. They hold leaders to account well and make sure that all action is evaluated carefully in order to understand the impact it has on the overall quality of provision for pupils.

The reviews of governance and pupil premium highlighted the effective work in these areas. Leaders and governors acted quickly on the recommendations in order to refine their work. Governors have improved their understanding of pupil premium funding and have made strategic decisions about the use of this. These additional funds are used well, for example, to successfully improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance.

The new SENCo has quickly improved staff knowledge and understanding of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. She has ensured that all staff access and consider pupils' 'learning passports'. In many cases, this has helped teachers to plan learning activities that more closely meet the needs of these pupils.

Leaders have shaped the curriculum so that it meets the needs of pupils better. The overall impact of the new spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) programme is too early to judge. However, pupils' views were mixed and they displayed insecurity

with their knowledge of fundamental British values, such as democracy.

Leaders have not yet commenced preparations for the school's transition to academy status because the academy order has only recently been received.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Since the last monitoring visit, the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment have improved across the school overall. Leaders have managed this improvement well. The professional development for teachers and teaching assistants has been highly effective. Many teachers are now more successful in understanding what their pupils know and, therefore, what next steps they need to take to develop pupils' learning securely. However, the quality of teaching and learning remains a concern in some curriculum areas.

Overall, lessons are more purposeful and teachers make good use of shared resources and structures to plan lessons well. Lessons mostly meet the needs of the pupils. However, this improvement is not securely embedded across all subjects and some learning lacks purpose and appropriate challenge. Pupils do not learn well when they are given tasks that are too easy or when they finish early and then have to wait for others to catch up.

Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved overall due to the raised awareness of their needs established by the new SENCo. Consequently, many teachers are taking pupils' needs into account more effectively, as they plan and deliver learning.

The quality of assessment has continued to improve across the school. Most teachers follow the school's assessment policy routinely and provide focused feedback to pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate this, along with the 'reflection time' that they are now given in order to improve their work.

Leaders have commissioned useful external support to help moderate and improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments. These are increasingly accurate, allowing more focused support to be provided to pupils. External support has also helped to improve teachers' understanding of the new examinations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school has continued to be very effective. During the inspection, pupils were courteous and the vast majority focused well on their learning in lessons. Pupils are proud of the differences that they can see in their school but they are frustrated by the inconsistencies they identify. They are pleased that a student council is being set up and they like the ways their ideas are listened to by school staff. One pupil told an inspector that Chamberlayne was 'much better' than her previous school because

she is 'treated as a young adult' and her voice is 'heard and listened to'.

Inspectors observed pupils behaving well in lessons and around the school. Pupils told inspectors that teachers are improving with the way that they deal with poor behaviour and that the school is 'totally different' to previously. Pupils, rightly, want poor behaviour to be eradicated and are pleased that staff are addressing the behaviour of the small proportion of pupils who persist in challenging school rules and expectations.

The very small proportion of parents and carers who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are more positive than at the previous inspection. However, some have a poor perception of pupils' behaviour and the school's effectiveness in dealing with bullying. This is very different to the situation described by pupils and observed by inspectors. Pupils across the school told inspectors that there is not much bullying and any such incidents are taken seriously by staff, who deal with them well. Pupils expressed frustration with what they described as 'issues from outside school' being brought into school. They say that school staff help to deal with these situations well. School records indicate that staff work hard to help resolve this type of situation and make good and appropriate use of external agencies.

Pupils are supported well to keep safe, especially when online. They have a good and secure understanding of e-safety. Younger pupils enjoy their SMSC lessons where they develop their personal, social and health education knowledge and skills well. For example, Year 8 pupils thoughtfully recounted their learning around consent and 'what "no" means'. However, they did not recognise the term 'radicalisation' or understand how to recognise and report extreme views.

Leaders' work to improve attendance has been very successful with improved attendance overall, especially for boys and disadvantaged pupils. However, there remain too many pupils who miss too much school. Leaders have a well-judged plan in place to build on this work.

Outcomes for pupils

Information presented by leaders, along with observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, indicates that in many areas pupils' outcomes are improving. For example, pupils' books show that their written work in English is well structured. Pupils learn how to sustain their writing and develop their ideas about texts into clear analysis. Their progress has improved since the previous monitoring visit. However, there remain stubborn pockets of inconsistency and low progress. For example, in science, current pupils' progress remains too low.

Pupils' presentation of their work and commitment to completing written tasks has improved overall, but still remains too varied between subject areas. For example, pupils who demonstrated strong writing skills in English did not show the same level

of work in their history books.

Pupils' pride and effort could be seen in the sample of religious education books and their dance progress logs. However, this pride was not as clear in pupils' mathematics, science and modern foreign language books.

Leaders' work to support disadvantaged pupils is effective and this group is now making similar progress to other pupils across the curriculum. Those pupils who have extra literacy and numeracy support have made good progress from their very low starting points. This helps them to access the wider curriculum.

External support

The local authority continues to provide highly effective support to the school, both practically and strategically. The school improvement officer has helped the headteacher to identify and broker appropriate support from a range of local schools and experts. This wide range of quality provision has helped leaders to implement the school improvements. The headteacher values this support and makes good use of it. The combined effect of this range of work is that teaching and middle leadership have become increasingly effective across the school, although there is further work to do to ensure that they are consistently good.