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Mr Jon Newman
Acting Principal
Teignmouth Community School, Exeter Road
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Dear Mr Newman

Short inspection of Teignmouth Community School, Exeter Road

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2018 with Malcolm Davison, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You became acting principal three weeks before my visit, following the sudden resignation of the previous principal. The announcement of his resignation caused uncertainty among staff and parents. However, you know the school well and you understand the challenges it faces. You have a stable senior leadership team around you, therefore, the interim leadership of the school is secure.

Pupils' progress, measured across eight GCSE subjects, was in line with the national average last year. However, their progress in key subjects, such as GCSE mathematics, science and humanities, was poor. As a result, the proportion of pupils attaining basic qualifications was too low. Many boys, in particular, finished Year 11 last year without attaining at least a grade 4 in both GCSE English and mathematics. In contrast, sixth-form students' progress on academic and applied courses is good. The school's arrangements for helping pupils transfer from primary school into Year 7 are strong.

When the previous principal arrived at the school in September 2016, he introduced many new ideas and approaches. For example, middle leadership roles were reorganised from the beginning of this academic year. This has enabled a better focus on the academic progress of particular groups of pupils. He introduced a new uniform and a new behaviour policy. Pupils' behaviour has improved as a result.

However, many pupils believe that teachers do not apply the new policy consistently enough.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that teachers set suitable work for pupils of different abilities. You have had some success. The least able pupils achieve well, but much work is still too easy for pupils of higher ability. Disadvantaged pupils' progress was identified as an area for improvement. Although you have received significant funding to provide extra help for these pupils, their progress last year was weak.

Pupils' progress in mathematics and science declined last year. Subsequent steps to strengthen teaching in these areas have had an impact in mathematics. However, pupils' achievement in science is still not good enough. Most pupils in key stage 4 study at least one humanities subject. You recognise that teaching in this curriculum area does not help pupils achieve their potential. You have begun to address this, but this work is at an early stage and so has not had significant impact yet.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders ensure that the school's policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose. Appropriate recruitment procedures and checks ensure that newly appointed staff are suitable to work with children. Senior leaders have recently introduced an improved system for recording any concerns staff have about the welfare of pupils. This system ensures that communication within school and with outside agencies is detailed and timely.

Senior leaders remind staff frequently about their safeguarding responsibilities by providing regular training and updates. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they feel safe in school and are well looked after. They have confidence in their teachers to deal with any incidents of bullying that occur. The majority of parents and carers believe that pupils are kept safe in school.

A team of suitably qualified staff provide good support for vulnerable pupils. Consequently, these pupils receive suitable early help at times of greatest need. The school has particularly good links with local youth and family support services, and with the police. Plans are in place to develop further the support offered to pupils with mental health difficulties.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders and governors have made efforts to engage with parents and seek their views about developments at the school. For example, a parent forum group was set up last year and this has been well attended. However, a high proportion of parents who responded to Parent View feel that communication from the school is poor and so they do not have enough information about their children's progress.
- The first line of enquiry in this inspection concerned the quality of mathematics and science teaching. In 2016, pupils' progress in both GCSE science and

mathematics was in line with the national average. However, in 2017 their progress was much weaker. The most able pupils' progress declined significantly. Senior leaders have provided training for teachers to help them more closely match work to pupils' prior attainment. This has begun to improve teaching in mathematics but teaching in science is still not stretching pupils sufficiently. This leads to weak progress, especially for the most able pupils. Pupils, particularly boys, typically do not show enough interest in science and, consequently, they take little pride in their work. They often complete written tasks in a cursory manner or do not finish them at all.

- The second line of enquiry looked at the support the school offers to disadvantaged pupils. This group of pupils made less progress than other pupils nationally last year in several curriculum areas. Their attainment in key GCSE subjects was too low and so many of these pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education. A restructuring of middle leaders' pastoral and curriculum responsibilities has led to better assessment of disadvantaged pupils' needs. Leaders now identify more precisely the barriers which might hold back individual disadvantaged pupils, particularly those in key stage 3. However, senior leaders do not evaluate the impact of the extra help given to these pupils with sufficient rigour. While the achievement of this group is improving, many of these pupils in key stage 4 lack confidence and their progress remains weak.
- The final line of enquiry considered pupils' progress in humanities subjects. The progress of pupils in this curriculum area last year was significantly weaker than that of pupils with similar starting points in other schools nationally. Teaching has not been sufficiently well planned to meet pupils' needs and raise their aspirations. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving have been too low. New leadership in humanities is beginning to change this. However, the school recognises that many pupils are still not motivated in humanities subjects and this hinders their achievement.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the small minority of pupils who find it difficult to take part in mainstream lessons receive an appropriate alternative within school. The school provides these pupils with individual programmes which help build their self-esteem. For example, some are involved in community projects. This has contributed to the success in recent years of many pupils whose previous attainment was low.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of science teaching improves so that it challenges pupils, particularly the most able, to make better progress
- science teachers plan activities that hold pupils' interest and motivate them to take pride in their work
- the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding is evaluated rigorously
- support for disadvantaged pupils is more effective and enables them to make

good progress in key GCSE subjects

- teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities are consistently high across all humanities subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair of the board of directors, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we held meetings with you, the chief executive officer of the trust and senior leaders. I held a meeting with the chair of the board of directors and six other directors. We made observations of learning across the school jointly with senior leaders. We looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. We held meetings with pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and spoke with pupils informally. We scrutinised a variety of documents including the school's development plans, assessment information, departmental reviews, records of recruitment checks and information relating to attendance. We took account of responses to questionnaires from 55 staff and 35 pupils. We considered 94 responses from parents to the Ofsted Parent View online survey.