

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Glen Allott
Principal
Wayland Academy Norfolk
Merton Road
Watton
Thetford
Norfolk
IP25 6BA

Dear Mr Allott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wayland Academy Norfolk

Following my visit with Kathryn Herlock, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 24 and 25 April 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 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 trust's statement of action 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 interim executive board (IEB), the chief executive officer (CEO) 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 incidence 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 incidence of disruption to teaching and learning reduces
 - 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 second monitoring inspection on 24 to 25 April 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, other senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, four members of the IEB and the CEO of the Norfolk Academies Trust. Inspectors and senior leaders spent time in lessons observing pupils at work. They sampled pupils' books to gauge the quality of their written work.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, staffing has remained stable. The number of pupils on the roll remains broadly the same. The IEB, which replaced the governing body last term, has been strengthened further by additional members, including two local headteachers and an academy improvement partner. The executive principal is now the CEO of the academy trust.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Regular monitoring ensures that you and your senior team know where the most effective teaching lies, and therefore where pupils are progressing well. You have also identified where further improvements are needed to enable pupils to make better progress than they currently do.

Notable improvements to pupils' behaviour and attendance since the last inspection have been sustained. The school remains calm and purposeful. This term, you have amended the procedures used to manage pupils' behaviour. Sanctions for verbal warnings and for the removal of pupils from lessons have been clarified to enable you to analyse the reasons for misbehaviour, and to inform the actions needed to prevent it from happening again. More time is needed to gauge the full impact of this new approach.

Faculty leaders, brought into your wider senior leadership team, are adding further capacity to improve. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and in raising pupils' achievement. Increasingly, they are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and sharing their specialist knowledge with staff to increase their effectiveness. They have identified where the strengths and weaknesses in provision lie within their areas of responsibility and have put suitable plans in place to lead improvements.

Your own evaluation has identified accurately the school's strengths and

weaknesses. You and your leadership team are using this information to inform your plans to secure further improvements. However, some of the areas you have identified for further improvement are too vague and will not therefore enable you to measure or demonstrate fully the impact of your work.

A strengthened IEB and a much sharper focus on school improvement from trust leaders are providing you with much greater support and challenge to resolve the issues raised in the last inspection. Minutes of regular meetings of the IEB and with the trust's CEO show that you and your leadership team are held much more accountable for ensuring that revised systems and procedures to aid improvement become firmly established. This heightened scrutiny is helping you to maintain and build upon the early gains noted at the time of the last monitoring inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Our joint observations confirmed your views that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. All teachers are using the school's agreed approach to planning learning. Seating plans show that they know the backgrounds and different abilities of pupils in their classes. They make good use of a wide range of resources. Pupils' behaviour is managed much more consistently by staff.

You and trust leaders acknowledge that this improvement provides a firm foundation for the next stage of development of teaching and learning. Our observations found that, too often, teachers work harder than pupils. In a significant minority of lessons, pupils make steady, rather than good progress, because teachers do not give them time to consolidate and deepen their knowledge, or review together what they have learned. Questioning is not always used effectively. It is not used to check that all pupils understand fully, or to encourage all learners to contribute to discussion.

Staff training has raised the awareness of teachers of the need to plan learning suited to pupils' different abilities. We found clear evidence that this is working and is leading to better progress in some areas. It is not consistent across and within all subjects. At times, teachers plan different tasks for learners, but do not introduce them early enough to ensure that pupils of all abilities engage fully in learning.

Increasingly, teachers are challenging pupils about the quality of their presentation, and the quantity of work produced in lessons. This is leading to some improvement, but its impact is limited because it is not done systematically. Books show that some staff insist on the use of rulers, writing in pen and completing all work. Elsewhere, pupils who write in pencil, draw in pen or do not take enough care in their work, are left unchallenged by teachers.

The school's agreed marking and feedback policy and procedures are followed by

most staff. For example, green and red-pen marking is common across a range of subjects. However, this is not consistent. At times procedures are often applied differently. In science, pupils' classwork is marked regularly, but books are not marked as often in English and in mathematics. It remains unclear how common errors in spelling and use of grammar are spotted and corrected at an early stage to improve pupils' writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Staff know pupils well. The 'meet and greet' as pupils arrive at the start of each day sets the tone for learning. Staff remind pupils of the expectations of them, and consequently pupils present themselves neatly in school uniform and bring the right equipment. Punctuality has improved. Gates are locked once the school begins and pupils understand the consequences for lateness.

Your records show that incidents of bullying, including the use of homophobic and derogatory language, have reduced significantly. Pupils who met with inspectors confirmed that they feel free from bullying and are kept safe in school. They are confident that if they raised concerns, staff would follow them up. Prefects help to maintain pupils' conduct around the school during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils Advising, Listening and Supporting (PALS) continue their effective work in talking with pupils who have concerns.

You have maintained the school's focus on raising pupils' awareness of the risk of radicalisation and extremism. Furthermore, the programme of welfare days, tutorials, assemblies and 'life lessons' used to do this has been broadened to give pupils a better understanding of diversity, and personal matters such as mental health. A few older pupils who met with me felt that their learning in life lessons could be improved further.

Your records also show that behaviour continues to improve. Far fewer pupils have been removed from lessons due to poor behaviour, compared to the same stage last year. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils excluded from school due to unacceptable behaviour has halved. Increasingly, pupils are attentive, and keen to learn.

Significant gains have been made in raising attendance. A wide range of actions to encourage pupils back into the school, and challenge the families of those who are regularly absent are leading to improvement. A much higher proportion of pupils are attending regularly, enabling them to benefit from the improvements being made to the school. Overall attendance is currently above average. The attendance of key groups, particularly disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, has also risen. Significantly, high rates of persistent absence noted in the past have fallen, and a much larger proportion of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are attending more often.

Outcomes for pupils

Overall, pupils are making better progress, because more of them are attending regularly and teaching is improving. Your latest assessment information indicates that the large majority of pupils are making improved progress. Our joint observations confirmed that this is still dependent on the quality of teaching, which remains inconsistent.

Not all teachers follow the school's agreed procedures for planning gold, silver and bronze tasks that fully challenge the most able, and enable the least able to achieve well enough. The most able pupils who met with inspectors said that they feel suitably challenged in most, but not all, of their lessons. Teachers are also setting them regular homework. Support assistants are often spread too thinly to meet the needs of pupils who need help with their learning in lessons. We found very few examples of approaches taken by teachers to overcome this in lessons with high proportions of pupils of lower ability, or with SEN and/or disabilities.

Pupil premium funding is being used more effectively to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. The impact of this is clearly evident in their higher attendance, and the improved progress they are making across a range of subjects. Targeting questions towards disadvantaged learners in lessons, checking that they complete all work, ensuring that they attend revision classes, and providing personalised support for them is leading to improved progress and engagement in school life.

External support

The school is working closely with a headteacher of a local school and an external agency to improve pupils' performance in key stage 4. Further discussions between trust leaders and the Department for Education have taken place this term relating to the termination warning notice issued last year. No further action has been determined at this stage.

The statement of action has been revised and is now fit for purpose. It includes clear targets and key milestones to enable you and trust leaders to check on the rate of improvement being made.