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Ms Hellen Bolton
Headteacher
Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science With Mathematics School
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Dear Ms Bolton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science With Mathematics School

Following my visit with Michael Cook, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 9–10 May 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 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.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive school governance committee, the regional schools' commissioner, the director of children's services for Wakefield and the chief executive officer of Pontefract Academies Trust. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the accuracy of leaders' judgements about the school's work by:
 - ensuring that the school's plans set out precise and timely measures of the impact that school development actions are expected to have
 - making sure that senior leaders check the accuracy and consistency of the information they gather on pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that middle leaders have sufficient opportunities to monitor the work of their teams and to intervene promptly to improve the consistency and impact of teaching.
- Improve governance at the school by ensuring that:
 - governors have a realistic view of how well the school is doing, based on accurate information
 - governors promptly develop their skills and understanding so that they are better able to hold leaders to account for their work
 - the findings of the review of governance recommended by the lead inspector are acted upon promptly and the impact of any recommended actions is measured carefully.
- Rapidly improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is similar to that of pupils nationally by:
 - rigorously monitoring the attendance of these pupils and acting promptly to reduce absence
 - further reducing fixed-term exclusions so that these pupils spend as much time as possible in school
 - ensuring that the implementation of the school's planned initiative to reduce absence through the work of a recently appointed, additional designated member of staff is very carefully and rigorously monitored by senior leaders and governors and that its impact is regularly reviewed.
- Significantly reduce variations in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations of all pupils, but especially those who are disadvantaged, so that they make rapid and sustained progress that is similar to, or exceeds, that of pupils nationally
 - all staff use the school's detailed information about individual pupils consistently to refine planning and focus their teaching so that disadvantaged pupils in particular make the progress that they should
 - all staff follow the agreed school policy of giving pupils regular indications of what they need to do to improve their learning, which are subsequently acted

on

– staff develop their expertise by having more opportunities to share the good practice that exists in the school.

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 third monitoring inspection on 9 May 2018 to 10 May 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and the new chief executive of the trust and the very recently appointed director of secondary education. Inspectors met with three members of the interim executive school governance committee (ESGC), subject coordinators and teachers. Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils both formally and informally and observed teaching across a wide range of subjects. Some of the visits to classrooms were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team and subject coordinators. Inspectors also conducted a series of tours of the school to see learning in progress.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the chief executive officer of Pontefract Academies Trust has retired, and the trust has appointed a new chief executive and a director of secondary education. One teacher is currently on maternity leave. A current member of staff is covering this absence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have continued to make steady progress in tackling the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. In particular, they have successfully sustained the improvements in attendance and kept the spotlight of attention on improving outcomes for disadvantage pupils. Leaders rightly view their current position as a 'work in progress'.

Senior leaders and subject coordinators have worked hard to make sure that improvement plans are useful, 'live' documents rather than being 'set in stone' from one year to the next. Subject coordinators increasingly use these plans to track the impact they are having on improving pupil outcomes. This helps inform subject coordinators whether they are improving teaching quickly enough and what their next steps should be.

Subject coordinators continue to improve, some faster than others. A growing number of subject coordinators clearly understand that they are in the business of making a difference to pupils' learning. There are still some subject leaders who are 'stuck'. Some still carry out their checks on teaching without showing whether they are making enough impact on pupils' learning and progress.

Leaders have continued to develop and refine the wide range of measures used for checking the accuracy and consistency of pupils' assessment information. Senior leaders continue to regularly check the validity and accuracy of teacher assessments. In-school information indicates that there is an overall rise in the

progress that pupils are currently making.

Governors continue to show that they are capable of asking challenging questions of leaders. Governors have used their skills audits well to recruit additional governors with valuable skills. Consequently, the ESGC is broadening and deepening its range of skills and experiences. This is helping governors to gain a more accurate view of how well the leaders are doing. Governors have received a wide range of data on current outcomes in both key stages 3 and 4. However, it is not easy or clear enough for them to gain a clear strategic overview of how well pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are doing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders continue to use in-school coaching to good effect. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The 'I know' sheets show that a growing number of teachers are thinking more carefully about how they can go about meeting the needs of individual pupils over time. This remains an effective way of sharing good practice across the school.

Most teacher expectations continue to rise. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations, particularly of low-attaining pupils. Consequently, these pupils fail to meet the school's expectations and sometimes produce scruffy and incomplete work. This group of pupils can regularly mis-spell basic key words, fail to underline their work with a ruler and draw diagrams in pen rather than pencil.

Some teachers use form time well. In these classrooms, older pupils discuss, for example, how to develop resilience in the face of failure. Younger pupils have targeted intervention to help them improve their literacy skills. However, in other classrooms teachers allow pupils to get away with doing very little. One pupil spoke for many when she said that form time leads to 'pretty much nothing' being achieved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have continued to refine and develop their approaches to improving attendance. These continue to have a positive impact. Overall absence rates continue to decline and are now near the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve. There has been a slight improvement in persistent absence levels and they too are now close to the national average. Fixed-term exclusions also continue to fall from a similar time last year. The use of the 'late gate' has helped improve punctuality to school.

Leaders have started to introduce steps for supporting those pupils with anxiety issues to try to improve their attendance. Assemblies now have more opportunities to focus on mental well-being. There has been a recently formed 'anxious parents

and pupils' support group. Referrals are now made for pupils who may benefit from online and face-to-face counselling. As these actions are relatively recent, it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

Many pupils are polite and welcoming. They are willing to open doors to visitors and greet them with a welcome. However, pupils rightly identify that there are the 'odd few' who can disrupt learning by being too chatty and not getting on with their work. Pupils generally behave well at breaktimes and lunchtimes. However, due to overcrowding there can be some pushing and shoving. Leaders have taken sensible steps to change this for next term by having split lunchtimes. Pupils have also welcomed the improvements to the toilets.

Outcomes for pupils

Current in-school assessment information indicates that Year 11 pupils continue to improve their academic outcomes. Overall, girls in Year 11 continue to outperform boys. English, mathematics and modern foreign languages show stronger attainment than science and the humanities, especially for the most able. Leaders have used a range of approaches to support pupils in improving their achievement, including the use of 'academic forms' to help some pupils improve their chances of examination success, timetabling extra lessons and taking pupils off to a hotel to study English and mathematics in style.

Outcomes in key stage 3 continue to remain a mixed picture. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress in English, mathematics and science. However, progress is not as strong in other subjects including modern foreign languages, drama, physical education and computing.

The monitoring of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not good enough. There is a lack of clarity as to how well these pupils are progressing. Leaders recognise that extra help and support for this group is having mixed success. Leaders have been slow to make the necessary changes that will improve the progress of this group. Although leaders have detailed logs of safeguarding and bullying incidents, not enough has been done to analyse and evaluate the extent to which this impacts the pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Another review of how pupil premium additional funding is used has been completed. Actions taken so far suggest that leaders are having a positive impact in Year 11. In-school information indicates that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing. However, leaders recognise that these gaps are widening in Years 9 and 10 and more work is needed to tackle this successfully.

External support

In a relatively short time, the new chief executive of the trust has worked hard to gain an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of all schools in the trust,

including Carleton. Together with the very recently appointed director of secondary education, they show high levels of ambition and are keen to see the school rapidly improve. It is too soon to evaluate the full impact of this support.

The chief executive of the trust recently commissioned an external review of the school. This provided a helpful insight into the progress the school is making towards becoming at least 'good' at the time of its next inspection.