

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 September 2018

Mrs Jane Moody
Headteacher
The Peele Community College
84 Little London
Long Sutton
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE12 9LF

Dear Mrs Moody

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The Peele Community College

Following my visit to your school on 17 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in July 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and senior leaders. I met with a group of subject leaders, a group of teachers and the coordinator of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. I also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I spoke formally with a group of pupils from Year 9 and Year 10 to discuss their learning and their experiences in the school. I observed, jointly with senior leaders, pupils' learning in lessons across different year groups and subjects and we reviewed a sample of pupils' work.

I scrutinised documents, including senior leaders' evaluations of the school's work, the school's information about current pupils' progress, and pupils' attendance and exclusions records. I examined information regarding the pupil premium funding, as well as a range of different policies on the school's website. I analysed recent minutes of governing body meetings. I also reviewed the school's single central

record and the system for recruiting staff, including some staff personnel files. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one of the deputy headteachers continued as acting headteacher until the end of August 2017. At that point, you took up your position as headteacher, having worked in the school for the previous two years as the head of science. You have assigned precise roles and responsibilities to members of the existing leadership team, so lines of accountability are clearer and more transparent.

At a middle leadership level, new heads of English and mathematics were appointed in September 2017, along with an acting head of science. At this point, although the school was fully staffed, some of the teachers were not trained or were temporary appointments. While recruiting specialist staff has remained a concern for you throughout the year, you are confident that the school will be fully staffed in September 2018, with an increased proportion of permanent, qualified teachers.

You have spent a considerable amount of time planning a reorganisation of the staffing structure this year, with confirmed changes due to take effect in September 2018. In some areas, such as the senior leadership team, positions will be lost, with one deputy and one assistant headteacher leaving the school at the end of the academic year. In other areas of the school, there will be changes to staff roles and responsibilities, and additional appointments made to improve the capacity of the school's inclusion team.

Significant changes have taken place within the school's governing body. Following the last inspection in July 2017, the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body both resigned their positions. These roles were officially filled in October 2017. A new clerk to the governing body, with experience of the role, was appointed in January 2018. Thanks to concerted efforts by the governing body, an additional six members have been recruited during the year, leading to a strengthening of skills within the group.

Formal discussions regarding the school's possible conversion to an academy are ongoing between the governing body, a potential sponsor and the Department for Education. As yet, no official date has been set for when this may take place.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have created a positive and collaborative culture in school. Through honest and open communication with you, staff feel able to voice their opinions and share their concerns with you more readily than previously. A comprehensive programme of meetings and staff briefings ensures that all staff are aware of developments taking

place in school and understand the contributions they can make.

The school's improvement plan is closely aligned to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report, with some additional aspects also included. You regularly review the plan with leaders and governors to closely track and precisely measure the impact of each priority. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they are over generous in their evaluation, since many of the areas for improvement are either in their early stages and yet to show positive impact, or there has been no action taken to address them.

You have secured subject-specialist leaders in almost all areas of the school. These leaders are more involved in decision-making processes than previously and they feel trusted to carry out their jobs, although they know whom to turn to for support if necessary. In a similar way, teachers are more involved in setting their own performance targets. However, leaders recognise that these lines of accountability need to be much more rigorously monitored.

Subject leaders devise detailed departmental development plans. These are beginning to inform the whole-school improvement plan, although this increased coherence is still in its early stages. Subject leaders carry out well-planned, quality assurance processes, including lesson observations and scrutinies of pupils' books. They are also becoming more skilled in analysing information about pupils' attainment and progress and planning support for those pupils who are underachieving. However, these strategies are not yet effective in bringing about significant improvements in pupils' outcomes. For example, progress for pupils currently in Year 11 is predicted to be weaker than in 2017, particularly in English.

The previous inspection recommended that a review of governance be carried out. This has not taken place, mainly because of the potential academisation process; however, governors have not been complacent. They are beginning to play a more visible role in school life. Individual governors have recently established links with different areas of the school's work, for example, safeguarding, although these links are yet to have tangible impact. The new chair and vice-chair of the governing body have sought guidance from the local authority and additional advice from an external adviser. They have worked closely with the headteacher and have a shared vision for bringing about improvements within the school. The six new governors are helping to secure a wider range of expertise, and the governing body is providing more informed support and challenge to leaders, holding them to account more thoroughly for their actions. However, governors still require additional training, for example, regarding how to interpret pupils' outcomes.

While leaders have carried out a review of the use of the pupil premium funding, as recommended at the previous inspection, they have not urgently acted on the advice to ensure that disadvantaged pupils' achievement is monitored more closely. Leaders have not devised a successful strategy to improve disadvantaged pupils'

outcomes, and nor have they ensured that additional funding for these pupils has been accounted for appropriately. Strategies in place to support these pupils have not been rigorously reviewed and evaluated. As a result, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and those of other pupils are as wide now as they were in 2017. Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be excluded, and they do not attend well compared with other pupils. Given that disadvantaged pupils account for more than one third of pupils in the school, leaders have failed to take effective action as far as this significant group of pupils is concerned.

Leaders have made sure that all the appropriate recruitment checks on staff are carried out. However, they have not ensured that they record these checks as thoroughly as they should. Leaders began to rectify this issue during the on-site monitoring inspection. Safer recruitment processes are now more secure. Similarly, leaders have not made sure that the school's safeguarding policy is reviewed and updated annually, in line with statutory guidance.

Leaders have introduced more rigour into the collection and analysis of pupils' outcomes. 'Raising attainment' meetings take place between heads of year and subject leaders to identify those pupils who require additional support. The coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been more strategic in his deployment of teaching assistants to support these pupils more closely. However, leaders recognise that the impact of this additional support has been variable and has not been thoroughly evaluated.

Teachers do not use pupil information consistently well to plan activities to meet pupils' needs. Not all subject areas moderate pupils' work to ensure that the assessment levels they record are accurate. Some teachers admitted that they do not feel confident in interpreting pupils' progress information. Meanwhile, pupils whom I spoke with said that some teachers do not share their target grades with them. Leaders have not ensured that teachers are making use of pupil information effectively to improve pupils' outcomes.

Leaders have focused their efforts to improve the quality of teaching on training teachers to have high expectations of pupils and stretching and challenging them in their learning. Teachers are encouraged to take risks in their lessons, so they engage pupils more readily in their learning. I observed learning where, for example, the teacher used effective questioning to elicit strong responses from pupils. In pupils' books, there was evidence of some pupils being encouraged to answer more difficult tasks. However, teachers do not maintain consistently high expectations of the pupils. According to the pupils I spoke with, while they do feel challenged in some of their lessons, some teachers 'do not mind if they don't work hard'. Leaders have not maintained a consistent focus on ensuring that teachers persist with these approaches.

Leaders have recently introduced a revised marking, assessment and feedback policy. Pupils said that teachers do not apply the policy consistently; in some

subjects they know how to improve their work, while in others they are unclear. A review of pupils' books confirmed this to be the case. As a result, teachers' feedback is not having a sustained impact on pupils' progress.

Pupils and staff have strong relationships. Both pupils and staff are confident that the behaviour of pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils said that staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and they all understand the rewards system and any consequences of their actions. I did not observe any poor behaviour during the inspection. However, where pupils were identified as off task during lessons, this was due to weak teaching that did not match pupils' needs or inspire them to learn.

While the school's overall attendance is higher than last year, it is still below the national average in 2017. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as well as other pupils. Their attendance has declined compared with the school's information in 2017. These two groups of pupils are also more likely to be persistently absent. Leaders have not taken effective action to bring about sustained improvements in the attendance of these pupils.

The school's online system for monitoring and tracking pupils is cumbersome. Leaders are not able to use it effectively to produce information, for example, to analyse sharply pupils' attendance. As a result, while leaders have implemented some strategies to support specific pupils and can track improvements for individuals, they are not able to identify patterns of attendance of specific groups of pupils reliably and bring about positive changes.

Since the school's last inspection, you have continued to receive support from the local authority. Strategy meetings take place every half term, when leaders are held to account for the progress being made towards meeting the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report, as well as for current pupils' outcomes.

You have sought and gained support from other organisations. Closer links with the Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance and the Greater Peterborough Teaching School Alliance have allowed staff to access a range of effective training opportunities. For example, a number of teachers are enrolled on national professional qualifications for school leadership. Staff said that they value these chances to extend their professional development, improve their practice and share their learning with others.

As headteacher new to your role, you have found informal help from a local headteacher in a successful school to be of use. Alongside this, staff benefit from attending valuable network meetings in the locality. These meetings give subject leaders the chance to reflect on their own practice and review, for example, departmental resources and schemes of work. You are also working more closely with local schools to provide pupils who have additional behavioural needs with an

opportunity to start afresh in a new school. Some of these pupil placements have been successful.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Due to the judgement I have made following this monitoring inspection, and the fact that a significant restructuring of the school's leadership is due to take place in September 2018, it is likely that the school will receive a further monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff

Her Majesty's Inspector