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Mrs Jenny Piper-Gale
Executive Principal
Humphrey Perkins School
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Dear Mrs Piper-Gale

Special measures monitoring inspection of Humphrey Perkins School

Following my visit with Russ Barr and Jason Brooks, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 11 and 12 September 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 June 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

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and reduce the inconsistencies in teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - use information about pupils’ attainment and progress to provide work that is at the right level
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide them with work is that is appropriately challenging
 - follow the school’s agreed marking and feedback policy, ensuring that they instil in pupils a pride in their work and encourage them to complete unfinished work
 - have a clear focus on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils to reduce the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally
 - have a clear focus on the progress made by boys and middle-ability pupils, so that it is at least in line with their peers nationally.
- Substantially improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - working with parents to increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that all teachers use the whole-school behaviour system consistently so that low-level disruption is eradicated, especially for boys.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - securing effective leadership at all levels, including governance, across the school
 - ensuring that leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attendance, attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, and use catch-up funding effectively to accelerate the progress of relevant pupils in Year 7
 - making sure that leaders closely monitor the work they do to check that all their actions have a positive impact on pupils’ achievement
 - ensuring that the school’s own evaluation of its performance, including the of quality of teaching, is accurate
 - supporting non-specialist teachers with effective training, particularly in English, mathematics and science
 - ensuring that the school’s website includes the required information.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this

aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 September 2018 to 12 September 2018

Evidence

Inspectors met with the chief executive officer from the Lionheart Academies Trust (LAT), the executive principal, the associate principal, members of the senior leadership team and governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. Inspectors also met with members of the teaching staff, including those teachers new to the profession. The lead inspector met with the director of English for the LAT. Inspectors visited a number of lessons across different subjects and age groups, accompanied by senior leaders. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, including during breaktime and lunchtime, when they observed pupils' behaviour. The inspection team evaluated the impact of the school's actions since the last inspection, in line with the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.

Context

The school will join the LAT in October 2018.

The interim headteacher, in post at the previous monitoring inspection, has left the school.

An experienced executive principal and newly appointed associate principal are now in post. A new chair of the governing body is in place. A senior leader has been seconded to the school from within the trust. A new head of the science faculty is in post. The creative faculty has undergone a restructure and has been separated to form the performing arts and creative arts.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

There is no longer the uncertainty about the school's future that was identified at the previous monitoring inspection. The school will join the LAT in October 2018.

The executive principal and associate principal have had an immediate and positive impact.

These leaders are very aware that the pace of the school's improvement has been too slow. They show absolute determination to rapidly stem the school's decline and ensure good provision for pupils. Improvement planning is thorough and is based on leaders' accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Planning is focused on the 'academic' and 'holistic', with the vision to educate the 'whole child'. At this early point in the school year, leaders have successfully communicated this vision. Staff report feeling positive about their leadership and the future

direction of the school.

The governing body has been reconstituted and a new chair of the governing body is in post. Governance is currently fit for purpose. Governance arrangements will change once the school joins the trust. The current governors will form the local governing body. All current governors, but particularly the vice-chair of the governing body, have shown a great deal of commitment and perseverance in pursuit of the school's improvement.

The executive principal and associate principal are acutely aware that the extended senior and middle leadership of the school is inconsistent in quality. Some leaders have shown great dedication and have real potential. They have not had the professional development or strong senior leadership role models required in order to successfully hone their skills. Additionally, leaders have not been rigorously held to account for their areas of responsibility. Plans are in place to address this, including the secondment to the school of a further leader from within the trust. However, the fact remains that some leaders are not as effective as is needed.

A pupil premium strategy is in place and leaders oversee the deployment of the funds allocated. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is lower than average. These pupils, particularly disadvantaged boys, significantly underachieve. They are more likely to be absent or excluded from school. The pupil premium strategy is not having an impact on improving standards. Although a pupil premium review had previously been undertaken, a further review is planned and will take place early in the autumn term 2018.

In the first weeks of the new school term, leaders have worked with staff to address the inconsistencies in teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. It is too early to comment on the full impact of this.

The school website now contains the required information.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve remain too low, particularly for the most able, boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The executive principal and associate principal have wasted no time in establishing clear and ambitious expectations with staff. Accountability measures are now in place to make sure that these expectations are realised. For example, the assessment system has been revised and training has been undertaken by all staff. There is now a developing clarity as to the progress pupils are required to make in order that they achieve as they should.

Leaders agreed with inspectors that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. In some curricular areas, the quality of pupils' learning is poor. Teaching is not supporting certain groups of pupils to achieve as they should,

including the most able. Inspectors observed pupils making weak progress within creative arts, humanities and science. Inspectors observed pupils making better progress in some of the English lessons.

Recruitment to this rural school is a challenge for leaders. Nevertheless, the profile of staffing is far more stable than at the previous inspection. Pupils told inspectors that they were grateful to be taught by subject specialists. They said that they were grateful, too, that their teachers were 'not always changing'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' conduct is exemplary. Inspectors did not observe any low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons or during breaktime and lunchtime. The proportion of behaviour points allocated to pupils by their teachers has reduced. Leaders have adapted the previous behaviour policy and pupils believe that these changes have added clarity. Pupils said that they now appreciated the rewards that they receive, and that good behaviour and positive attitudes are now rewarded.

Many pupils are treated with care and respect by their teachers. However, some teachers' expectations of the conduct of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are far too low. Too many of these pupils are excluded from school. Pupils' attendance has improved. Much effort is employed to ensure that pupils attend as they should. Nevertheless, leaders acknowledge that still too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are persistently absent. Some are persistently absent because of repeated school exclusion. The systems in place to support these pupils are not working as effectively as needed.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors were positive about the school and the opportunities that they received. They praised their teachers and the many ways in which they gained opportunities for extra-curricular activities, including sport and the arts. One group of most-able pupils particularly appreciated the opportunities for student leadership. They said that this was building their confidence and helping prepare them for their future.

Outcomes for pupils

The initial information about pupils' attainment in key stage 4 examinations in 2018 indicates that pupils continued to underachieve. Leaders' own information indicates that pupils' key stage 4 attainment was broadly average in English and science, but that attainment in some subjects, including mathematics and some creative subjects, was poor. Disadvantaged pupils did not attain as well as their peers.

There remains much to do at key stage 3 to establish a meaningful curriculum and a well-understood process to assess pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.

External support

The external support, provided by Rushey Mead Education Trust, ended in the summer term 2018.

The LAT has provided extensive support to the school. Continuous and intensive support is planned. Staff, including those new to the profession, indicated to inspectors their appreciation of the collaboration, professional development and training opportunities that they are now able to access. The expert subject support and advice of the trust's directors of learning are of value. They have an important role to play in supporting the rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that is urgently needed.