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10 October 2018

Mr Neil Jamieson  
Principal  
The Cheadle Academy  
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Staffordshire  
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Dear Mr Jamieson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Cheadle Academy**

Following my visit with Julie Griffiths, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 25 to 26 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 last section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017.

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.

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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017.**

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that there is rapid improvement in the achievement of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, by ensuring that:
  - leaders systematically evaluate which improvement strategies are effective and which are not, so that the school can move forward quickly
  - governors have the skills and understanding to analyse school performance information independently and so effectively hold leaders to account
  - leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously, so that well-focused support can be put in place to tackle any identified underperformance
  - the curriculum meets the needs of pupils and promotes their progress
  - teachers across the school actively promote and develop pupils' understanding and acceptance of fundamental British values
  - teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are reliable and accurate
  - literacy and numeracy catch-up funding has a positive impact on those pupils in Year 7 who need to improve their basic skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress from their starting points by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment and other information to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs
  - have consistently high expectations of pupils' progress and what they can achieve
  - plan activities and use resources that engage pupils and move their learning forward.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons and around school by ensuring that:
  - leaders establish a culture of safeguarding that permeates all the school's work
  - all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and consistently apply the school's behaviour policy
  - teachers manage pupils' challenging behaviour by consistently applying the school's behaviour policy.
- Urgently improve attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils, by fostering strong relationships with parents, to involve them in the process of getting their children to attend school regularly.

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 25 to 26 September 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors assessed the impact of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were held with the principal, the vice-principal, the assistant principal, other leaders and staff.

The lead inspector met with seven governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. He also had a telephone conversation with a consultant commissioned by the school to provide support.

Inspectors made short visits, with senior leaders, to a range of lessons in every key stage. During these visits, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and during social time. Formal and informal discussions took place between inspectors and pupils.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including improvement plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Information about safeguarding and pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and welfare were also analysed.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, a vice-principal has left the school and a member of staff has been promoted to the role of assistant principal. A former assistant principal is now the head of inclusion and three other members of staff have been seconded to the role of associate assistant principal. New directors and deputy leaders of mathematics and science have been appointed, along with teachers of physical education (PE), humanities, a part-time teacher of music and a part-time teacher of psychology and sociology.

The previous leader, deputy leader and a teacher of science have left the school. The deputy leader of mathematics and teachers of mathematics, music and humanities have also left the school.

A finance officer has joined, and the previous finance manager has left the school.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders continue to use their detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to inform action to improve provision. The school's improvement plan focuses on the key areas for development and leaders are now evaluating the impact of strategies systematically. They are using this information more effectively to sharpen their approaches towards improving the quality of education

that they provide.

Middle leadership is developing, and it has been strengthened by new appointments. Subject leaders are now taking more responsibility for making improvements in their areas of school. However, it is too early to assess the impact of their actions.

The inclusion manager, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, knows the pupils for whom she is responsible very well. She monitors the progress made by individual pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities very closely. She has ensured that there are a range of interventions in place to help these pupils develop socially, emotionally and academically. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and she is taking action to make improvements. However, inconsistencies in the quality of support and the progress that this group of pupils make remain.

Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has a higher profile in the school. It features throughout the school improvement plan and all staff have performance management targets linked to improving provision and outcomes for this group of pupils. However, as expectations were not high enough in the past, as strategies were not coordinated, and the impact of actions were not thoroughly evaluated, disadvantaged pupils have continued to underachieve. Revised plans are in place to address this, but they are yet to have an impact.

Year 7 catch-up funding has been used for many interventions to develop pupils' knowledge of English and mathematics. The strategies used led to pupils making sustained progress in English, but they had limited impact in mathematics. Consequently, leaders have adapted the school's approach to how pupils are helped to improve their mathematical knowledge and skills. Once again, it is too early to assess the impact of this revised strategy.

The improvements in governance identified at the time of the last monitoring inspection have been sustained and developed. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's priorities and hold leaders to close account. They are passionate about improving the school for the benefit of the pupils.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the strong culture of safeguarding has been maintained. Systems that were in place at the time of the last inspection have been developed and pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Staff have also continued to actively promote and develop pupils' understanding and acceptance of fundamental British values.

Pupils study a broad and balanced key stage 3 curriculum that promotes progress in many subject areas. Pupils can select courses from a range of options in key stage 4 and benefit from a variety of enrichment opportunities throughout their time in the school. However, as a result of poor teaching in the past, the

curriculum has not led to good outcomes at the end of key stage 4. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously and provide well-focused support to help staff improve their practice. Higher expectations, bespoke training, coaching, sharing of the best practice and accessing carefully selected external support are all helping to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, inconsistencies remain.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching continues to improve and there is evidence of some strong practice in the school. Staff know the pupils well and use positive relationships to help pupils learn effectively. Pupils now have more positive attitudes to learning, they usually behave well in class and work productively with each other. They are becoming increasingly confident learners.

When teaching is most effective, staff have high aspirations and they use their secure subject knowledge and appropriate resources to plan engaging tasks that focus on what they want the pupils to learn. More staff are using the range of information that is available to them to plan activities that allow pupils to make good progress from their different starting points. They use questions well, set tasks that build on prior learning and develop long-term memory, and reinforce high expectations.

As expectations are higher, pupils are taking more care with their presentation. They are given many opportunities to develop their literacy skills in most subjects and staff are beginning to promote numeracy across the curriculum more effectively.

Teachers model the good use of spoken English and use subject-specific terms appropriately. As a result, pupils are now using more academic language as a matter of course. Verbal and written feedback is improving but inconsistencies remain. Some staff do not apply the school's feedback policy well. They do not make it clear what pupils need to do to improve their work and others do not check that pupils have responded to their feedback.

When teaching has less impact, pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged to make strong progress, teaching assistants are not well deployed and learning is not moved on at the appropriate pace. At times, tasks are too easy, or pupils are not given opportunities to consolidate learning when they are tackling more challenging activities. Staff do not yet use progress information consistently well to inform their planning. Too often, they focus on the task rather than the learning that they want to take place.

As a result of moderation within and between departments and by working with other schools, the accuracy of assessment information continues to improve. However, inconsistencies remain. Leaders are aware of which staff need further

support to improve their practice.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils are proud of their school and usually behave well in a calm and orderly environment. Pupils are courteous, and their conduct has continued to improve during social time and in lessons. Although some pupils quietly lose interest in their studies, learning is rarely disrupted. The need for sanctions has reduced significantly and pupils respond positively to praise and rewards. The new behaviour policy is embedded and used consistently.

Leaders are now analysing the information that they collect about behaviour and attendance more closely to identify trends and inform further action. This is supporting the improvements that are evident in this aspect of the school's work.

Punctuality has improved, and attendance is improving. Fewer pupils are regularly absent and last year's attendance was close to the national average. Almost all groups of current pupils have better attendance than at the same time last year. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has increased markedly. However, although improving, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils still does not match that of other pupils.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and careers education, information, advice and guidance are very strong in key stage 4. As a result, all pupils from last year's Year 11 moved onto further education and training.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Overall outcomes for Year 11 pupils improved slightly in 2018. Leaders' analysis of the results indicated that pupils achieved well in BTEC business, health and social care, sport and information communication technology. Outcomes in GCSE photography, art and textiles were strong and attainment in English improved markedly.

However, pupils did not do well in mathematics, science, German and GCSE PE. Outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils were too low and the attainment of boys was below that of girls.

In other year groups, pupils made slower progress in mathematics and science than in other subjects, the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was variable and disadvantaged pupils did not make strong enough progress in Years 8 to 10. However, pupils did well in key stage 3 computing and made secure progress in English, particularly in Years 7 and 9.

### **16 to 19 study programmes**

Last year, every Year 13 student moved onto an appropriate destination, including universities and apprenticeships. Almost all gained a pass in the subjects that they studied, and outcomes were strongest in fine art, English language, philosophy and history. However, students achieved less well in mathematics, business studies, geography and English literature. The proportion of students who achieved the higher grades was also lower than the school's targets.

Current students continue to benefit from good teaching within an improved curriculum, enrichment opportunities and strong safeguarding practices. This small provision meets the needs of the students who access it.

### **External support**

School leaders continue to receive good-quality support from an external company of consultants. The recent pupil premium review provides leaders with clear next steps to help them to improve their practice.