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30 November 2018

Mrs Denise Burrows  
Headteacher  
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Princethorpe Way  
Coventry  
CV3 2QD

Dear Mrs Burrows

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Ernesford Grange Community Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 14 and 15 November 2018, with Lesley Yates, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Clare Considine and Dan Robinson, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2016. 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 may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the chief executive officer of the trust, the regional schools commissioner, and the director of children's services for Coventry. 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 December 2016.**

- Improve leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - governors have the skills and understanding to hold school leaders to account for the school's performance
  - the curriculum at key stage 4 promotes all pupils' progress
  - teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are reliable
  - pupil premium funding has a positive impact on the attendance, progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils
  - literacy and numeracy catch-up funding has a positive impact on those pupils in Year 7 who need to improve their basic skills
  - leaders evaluate training for teachers in terms of its impact on pupils' progress
  - provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures good progress
  - pastoral middle leaders become more effective at improving attendance.
- Improve attendance across Years 7 to 11 by:
  - carefully evaluating the impact of the school's strategies for the improvement of attendance to determine which strategies are effective and which are not
  - challenging and supporting parents of pupils with high levels of absence to ensure that their child's attendance improves.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and middle-ability pupils make good progress by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment and other information to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs
  - plan lessons across all subjects that develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
  - deploy teaching assistants so that their impact is consistently positive on pupils' progress
  - consistently tackle poor behaviour so that learning is not disrupted.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 14 November 2018 and 15 November 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors assessed the impact on outcomes for pupils of leaders' actions taken since the last monitoring inspection. The focus was on the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last full inspection and the quality of education in the sixth form.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of Sidney Stringer Multi-Academy Trust (the MAT), and four members of the interim executive board (IEB), two of whom are also directors of the MAT.

An inspector spoke to three parents on the second day of the inspection and the views of a small number of parents who had contacted Ofsted directly were considered. Inspectors also reviewed the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Meetings were held with groups of pupils, and inspectors also spoke with pupils informally and observed behaviour during social time and in lessons. Short visits were made with leaders to a range of lessons in every key stage. During these visits, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors also examined a sample of pupils' books.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and minutes of meetings of the IEB. Information about safeguarding and pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and welfare was also analysed.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, the acting assistant headteacher has been appointed on a permanent basis to lead the strategy for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. A learning support assistant has joined the school and a new teacher of mathematics has been appointed to start in January 2019.

There are currently no students in Year 12. Leaders plan to recruit Year 12 students next year.

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

Leaders are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they use this knowledge well to prioritise actions to improve the school.

Leadership is developing at all levels. Subject leadership has continued to improve and leadership in the pastoral team is strong. High-quality training and professional development continue to be used well to develop leadership, teaching and other aspects of the school's work.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning. It promotes personal development, positive behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and fundamental British values very well. The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.

Additional funding is having a positive impact on the outcomes of targeted pupils. Funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used well and the use of literacy and numeracy catch-up funding has led to marked improvements for pupils who had not reached the expected standards in English and mathematics before they joined the school.

Pupil premium funding is being used effectively to improve outcomes for current disadvantaged pupils. Their attitudes to learning, behaviour, progress and attendance are all better than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. Strategies in the school's 'Target 10' initiative are having a very positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.

Parents and carers are becoming increasingly positive about the school. They value the communication they have with staff and the majority of those who made their views known during the inspection would recommend the school to another parent.

The school has an effective and well-embedded safeguarding culture. This aspect of the school's work continues to be well led and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and duties.

Governance is strong, and members of the IEB and trustees hold leaders to close account. Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and focus well on the school's priorities for improvement.

Leaders have high expectations. They lead by example and have created a positive and ambitious culture that develops respect and tolerance. However, pupils' outcomes in 2018 did not improve. Leaders are now focusing more on improving the quality of teaching across the school to ensure that all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and pupils with SEND, make better progress.

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

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve. Most staff follow the school's routines well and there is more evidence of strong teaching than in the past. During the inspection, examples of good practice were seen in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, phonics interventions, physical education, modern foreign languages and sociology.

Pupils and staff enjoy positive relationships, and this has helped pupils to develop improved attitudes towards learning. Staff now apply the school's feedback policy better than in the past and most pupils respond well to this to improve their work.

Pupils are proud of their achievements and books are well kept. The quality of pupils' work and presentation have improved, and there is now little difference in the standard of work produced by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school. Pupils are able to write at length in many subjects and staff help pupils develop their communication skills well. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively across the curriculum.

Assessment practice is improving, and assessment information is now more accurate. Teachers give parents clear information about how well their child is progressing towards achieving the expected standards and outline what their child needs to do to improve.

Most staff plan to meet the needs of individual pupils well and learning support assistants are effectively deployed. However, teachers do not always provide pupils, particularly the most able pupils, with the right levels of challenge. Low expectations hinder pupils' progress.

The poor teaching that was evident in the past has been eradicated. However, not all teaching is as effective as the best in the school. For example, there is still variability in the quality of planning and feedback and teachers do not consistently adapt learning activities in response to pupils' understanding. Pupils are still not given opportunities to take full responsibility for their learning on a regular basis.

The quality of teaching in tutor time has improved but is not yet as effective as other teaching across the school.

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

The school has a positive culture based on its core values. The house system, effective use of rewards, the induction process for Year 7 and the well-planned tutor programme are all having a marked impact on the ethos of the school.

Pupils are increasingly self-confident, and they are developing their understanding of how to be successful learners. They are keen to learn and go to lessons fully

equipped with their 'essential 7' pieces of equipment. Positive behaviour is now the norm and low-level disruption is rare.

Behaviour around the school continues to improve. Staff are well trained in managing pupils' behaviour and clear procedures are applied consistently. Pupils respond positively to higher expectations.

Pupils and staff told inspectors that behaviour has improved considerably. Pupils feel safe in school and they believe that bullying is rare. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are proud of their school and they are keen for the improvements that they have seen to be recognised.

Leaders have effective systems in place to analyse pupils' behaviour, which enable staff to target interventions to help pupils improve their conduct. As a result, the number of incidents of misbehaviour and fixed-term exclusions overall are declining. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last monitoring inspection. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils remains higher than that for other pupils.

Attendance is now close to the national average and absence and persistent absence continue to decline. Leaders monitor and analyse attendance information effectively to identify strategies to make further improvements. For example, targeted action has led improvement in the attendance of pupils with SEND. However, attendance for pupils in key stage 4 is lower than that of pupils in key stage 3 and absence rates for disadvantaged pupils are still too high. Although punctuality is improving, too many pupils are late to school in the morning.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Many of last year's Year 11 pupils made rapid progress during their final year in the school but, as a result of poor teaching in the past, overall outcomes at the end of key stage 4 were well below the national averages. Outcomes in humanities and modern foreign languages were poor and a small proportion of pupils attained a strong pass in both English and mathematics. Boys underachieved and pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils made less progress than other pupils. In 2018, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils widened. Outcomes for middle prior attaining pupils and the most able pupils were below those for similar pupils nationally.

However, some groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with low prior attainment, made similar progress to the national averages for these groups of pupils. Outcomes in vocational and creative subjects, including art, construction, drama, food, health and social care, media and music, were stronger than those achieved in other areas.

As a result of improved teaching, current pupils are making better progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The progress that pupils are making in key stage 3 is particularly strong.

Pupils with SEND continue to make better progress than they have done in the past. The progress made by boys, middle prior attaining pupils and the most able pupils and, in particular, disadvantaged pupils is greatly improved. Strategies in place to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are having a marked effect. They are making improved progress in every year group and differences in levels of attainment are diminishing rapidly.

As a result of effective and improving careers education, almost all pupils moved on to meaningful and sustained destinations when they left the school.

### **16–19 study programmes**

The head of the sixth form has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's sixth-form provision. He has ensured that all the requirements of the 16–19 study programmes are met within an appropriate curriculum offer. Students follow individualised study programmes. They benefit from tailored work-related learning, including work experience, and they are given opportunities to develop their written and communication skills across a range of subjects.

However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is not as strong as that in key stages 3 and 4. Effective teaching strategies that are now embedded lower down the school are not routinely used in sixth-form lessons. For example, staff do not always adapt activities as a result of checking learning in lessons and, at times, they move learning on too quickly.

In the past, some students have been recruited to the sixth form without having the prior knowledge necessary to be successful. As there were not enough applicants with the required qualifications, school leaders took the decision not to provide a Year 12 offer this year. Staff from the school helped pupils to find courses elsewhere.

In 2018, all students following A-level courses gained passes at grades A\*–E for the second successive year. Students achieved well in vocational courses and outcomes in art, product design and psychology were positive. However, overall outcomes declined last year and too few students attained the higher grades. Students did not perform as well in geography, information and communication technology, mathematics and physics as they did in other subjects.

Current students are making better progress both in academic and in vocational subjects. Tailored support and small teaching groups are having a positive impact on learning in most subjects. Students are achieving well in many areas, including

chemistry, mathematics and the extended project.

### **External support**

The Sidney Stringer MAT continues to offer high-quality support and challenge to the school. Over time, the MAT has added a great deal of capacity to the school but, as Ernesford Grange Community Academy has improved, the level of support it has required has decreased.