

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Glen Allott
Principal
Wayland Academy Norfolk
Merton Road
Watton
Thetford
Norfolk
IP25 6BA

Dear Mr Allott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wayland Academy Norfolk

Following my visit with Dan Gee, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 16 and 17 January 2019, 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 April 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.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board (IEB), the leader of the academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - reducing the incidence of bullying and eradicating pupils' use of homophobic and derogatory language
 - ensuring that pupils have a secure understanding of the dangers of radicalism and extremism so that risks posed towards them by those with extreme values or beliefs are minimised
 - reviewing the procedures used to manage pupils' attendance, and ensuring that pupils' absence, particularly persistent absence, is tackled effectively so that attendance of all groups of pupils rises to at least the national average
 - analysing with governors the impact of the ways in which pupil premium funding is being used to support disadvantaged pupils so that resources can be allocated in the most effective manner.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan learning so that it meets the needs of different pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
 - follow the school's behaviour policy consistently so that the incidence of disruption to teaching and learning reduces
 - insist that all pupils complete well-presented work to the best of their ability
 - address the errors that pupils make in spelling, punctuation and the use of grammar so that they are able to write with increasing accuracy and confidence.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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 third monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 January 2019

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils and the interim executive principal of the academy trust. A telephone conversation was held with the Norfolk Academies Board of Directors' chairman to gain his views. Inspectors observed pupils at work in lessons and sampled pupils' books.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a new leader of mathematics has taken up her post. Another teacher in the department has been promoted to increase the capacity to lead improvements in mathematics. The number of pupils on the roll has fallen slightly. The previous chief executive officer of the academy trust has left. An experienced headteacher from another school within the trust has taken up his role as interim executive principal of the academy trust. Changes have been made to the IEB. Some members have left and an experienced leader of another academy trust has been appointed to the board.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Improvements to the first key area for improvement noted at the time of the previous monitoring inspection – with regard to pupils' behaviour – have been sustained. Your own records and inspectors' observations confirm that behaviour has improved further. The school remains calm and purposeful. Most pupils respond positively to the procedures you and your staff have established to manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils told us that they feel safe in school – free from bullying – and that behaviour in lessons is much better now.

Less progress has been made in resolving the second key area for improvement, concerning teaching, learning and assessment. You and trust leaders acknowledge that this remains a top priority for the school. Over time, teaching has improved. There is effective teaching across a range of subjects. However, it remains inconsistent. Your monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to pinpoint where the main weaknesses lie. These weaknesses are not followed up systematically to improve the performance of staff. Not all teachers demonstrate the full impact of the additional training and development that they receive. Leaders are not demonstrating enough determination and rigour to resolve this area for improvement quickly.

Within school, you have changed the roles of pastoral leaders so that they focus on monitoring the academic progress of pupils and their welfare. Behavioural matters are now the responsibility of your inclusion team. Leaders have not yet evaluated

the impact of this change fully to ensure that it contributes towards raising achievement this year.

The school's spending of the pupil premium had little impact on improving the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils in 2018. Not all of this funding is targeted discretely towards disadvantaged pupils. For example, it provides resources to accelerate the reading of all pupils, not just those pupils for whom the funding is intended. Additional support from an experienced leader has been provided by another school within the trust to work alongside your deputy principal to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This is at an early stage of development.

Trustees made changes to the executive leadership of the academy trust at the end of 2018. An experienced headteacher from within the trust has been appointed to oversee improvements across all schools within the trust, including Wayland Academy. The academy trust fully supports you in your actions to secure further improvement.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

At the time of the last monitoring inspection, teaching was improving. This continues to be the case. There is clear evidence of secure and – at times – highly effective teaching. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Most teachers use the school's agreed procedures for managing pupils' behaviour effectively. They are confident in using interactive whiteboards to demonstrate what they want pupils to learn. In English and mathematics lessons in key stage 4, staff use their expert knowledge well to show pupils what they need to do to answer examination questions fully and gain top marks. They enable pupils to work for extended periods of time by themselves and in small groups – without the support of teachers – to develop a thorough understanding of their learning.

Teaching in a range of foundation subjects – subjects other than English and mathematics – which was observed jointly with you and your deputy, is too variable. At times, it is not good enough. The planning of learning is inconsistent because not all staff adhere to the school's agreed procedures. Expectations of pupils are not always high enough. The good standard of presentation generally evident in pupils' English and mathematics books is not matched in all subjects.

Over time, you have introduced a range of new approaches to gain consistency in how teachers plan learning to meet the different needs of pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND. These procedures are not firmly established. At the start of lessons, all teachers share 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' tasks with pupils to encourage them to select suitable work to do. These tasks are not always well planned to challenge fully the most able pupils or to include the less able pupils in learning. Often, teachers teach the same task to all pupils, regardless of the gold, silver and bronze tasks set.

Seating plans confirm that teachers know the different needs and abilities of pupils in their classes. Newly introduced 'planning for progress' sheets – intended to improve the learning of targeted pupils – are making little difference to pupils' progress. They are having a limited impact because most of the strategies listed relate to managing pupils' behaviour, rather than promoting their learning. Teachers are not using the assessment information they have about pupils to inform specific actions they can take in lessons to improve pupils' learning and accelerate their progress. In a minority of lessons, we noted discrete actions taken by teachers to promote the learning of pupils with SEND or those known to be disadvantaged, such as personalised one-to-one support. However, in most lessons we visited, learning was not sufficiently personalised to enable these pupils to make improved progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Significant gains have been made in addressing the first key area for improvement raised at the time of the last full inspection, which related to pupils' behaviour and safety, and their attendance. Both groups of pupils who spoke with us told us that they feel safe in school. Your most recent surveys confirm the views of pupils and their parents and carers that pupils are kept safe.

Your actions to reduce incidents of bullying and homophobic language continue to lead to improvement. Pupils recognise the intensive work done by staff to limit all forms of bullying in school and talked confidently about the actions taken by staff when incidents do occur. They know that they can use the 'bully box', email or telephone lines or speak with Year 11 pupils who act as 'Pupils Advising Listening and Supporting' if they have concerns. They respect the school's directive that mobile telephones should not be used in school.

Pupils also feel that they have a better awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism through the work done in regular assemblies and tutorials. When asked, they showed a good understanding of the risks posed towards them by those with extreme values and beliefs. Not all of them could explain the risks presented by right-wing extremism in their local region.

Attendance continues to improve. Currently, it is higher than it was at this stage in the previous two years and is much closer to that found nationally. Pupils say that constant reminders of the need for regular attendance, systematic checks if they are absent and rewards for good attendance – including trips out of school – all encourage them to attend regularly.

Significantly, the attendance of key groups of pupils has also improved. Although not as high as others, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has risen due to the targeted work by your inclusion team to get these pupils back into school. This is an important improvement as low attendance contributed to the underachievement of these groups of pupils last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Despite the actions taken listed in the school's statement of action and improvement plan, overall progress rates in 2018 remained below those found nationally. The proportions of Year 11 pupils attaining the expected standards in English and mathematics declined. Results in a wide range of foundation subjects were low. These outcomes are not good enough. Prompt improvement in attainment is an essential priority.

The school's own assessment information shows that, currently, improved teaching and better attendance are enabling most pupils to make better progress. Our observations of pupils at work in lessons and scrutiny of a sample of their written work support this view. However, this is not evident in all years and subjects. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not yet ensuring that all pupils regularly make good progress in their lessons.

Pupils with SEND did not make enough progress in 2018. Not all of them were sufficiently encouraged and challenged to attend school regularly. They did not receive the support they needed in and out of lessons to meet the expectations of them. The leader of SEND is taking steps to improve this. Assessments and monitoring are becoming more robust and are enabling staff to identify at an early stage those in need of additional help. This year, you have increased the number of teaching assistants in school to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.

The achievement of disadvantaged pupils continues to lag behind that of others in the school and other pupils nationally. A previous external review of the use of the pupil premium informed your plans for improvement. Funding has helped to improve their attendance but made little difference to the outcomes they achieved last year. You have recognised that a further review is necessary to enable you to allocate this funding far more effectively. You intend to commission a second external review of the pupil premium later this term.

External support

The chief executive of a local multi-academy trust has joined the IEB to provide you with additional challenge and support. The academy trust has made changes in its leadership to provide further support and challenge to raise achievement. These arrangements are new. Not enough time has passed for you, your team of senior leaders and the new executive leader of the trust to demonstrate that, together, there is sufficient capacity to raise achievement this year.