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Mrs Julie-Ann Swaysland
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Swaysland

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ivingswood Academy

Following my visit to your school on 13 and 14 February 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2018.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose

the school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, and the executive head of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2018

- Prioritise the work to address weaknesses in safeguarding procedures and strongly promote pupils' welfare, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - all safeguarding procedures follow the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State and meet statutory requirements
 - staff's understanding of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe is updated regularly
 - risk assessments are completed appropriately, kept up to date and implemented effectively.
- Improve the quality of leadership and governance, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - all systems for monitoring the work of the school are robust and leaders and managers are held to account for the progress of all groups of pupils
 - the progress of all groups of pupils is assessed accurately by school leaders
 - middle leaders' skills are developed effectively to enable them to have a greater impact on improvements in teaching, learning and assessment
 - the school's curriculum is thoroughly reviewed to engage and excite pupils in a wide range of learning across all subjects
 - all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and thoroughly checked
 - the school's website meets statutory requirements
 - governors take a full and effective role in challenging leaders to bring about rapid improvement.
- Actively promote the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - keeping consistent and accurate logs of all behaviour and bullying incidents
 - analysing patterns of behaviour in order to enable effective action to be taken to improve it
 - urgently tackle pupils' absence and lateness, particularly for those who are persistently late or absent.
- Enhance provision and the quality of learning for children in the early years by:
 - providing a range of experiences that challenge and extend children's learning
 - making sure all adults actively promote children's language development.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently effective in order to raise standards and enable all groups of pupils to make at least good

progress by:

- raising expectations of what pupils can do and the progress they can make
- providing effective support for all groups of pupils to enable them to make at least good progress from their starting points.
- challenging the most able pupils to enable them to make rapid progress, gain a deeper level of understanding and reach high standards
- making sure teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are accurate
- using assessment information to adjust plans and learning in lessons to provide sufficient challenge to all groups of pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 February 2019

Evidence

During the inspection, I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, middle leaders, staff, parents, the chair and members of the governing body, the executive head of the Red Kite Schools Trust and the school's improvement partner. I met formally with two groups of pupils and spoke to pupils informally when observing the school's work. I conducted joint lesson observations with you and looked at work in pupils' books. The school's action plan was evaluated.

Context

This was the first monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in September 2018. Since the inspection, a new inclusion manager, responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupil premium funding and safeguarding, has been appointed. Two deputy designated safeguarding leads have been appointed to ensure that safeguarding arrangements at the school are fit for purpose. The number of pupils on the school's roll has fallen slightly. The chair of the governing body took up the post in September 2017.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

This monitoring inspection report confirms that school leaders and governors have worked hard to address the previous inspection findings. However, senior leaders and governors acknowledge the need to continue to drive significant further improvement.

The trust's statement of action focuses pertinently on the areas for improvement identified in the September 2018 inspection report. Suitable plans to improve the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress are outlined, with clear timescales, responsibilities and success measures. However, the strategic overview to improve the teaching and learning of English and mathematics is not as clear. Although the leaders of English and mathematics have accurately identified areas for improvement, with clear monitoring and tracking arrangements, the framework to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning is not explicit. You and the multi-academy trust (MAT) acknowledge that this is a priority for the school.

You have secured improvements in the school's safeguarding arrangements. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work at the school. Through the appointments of a new designated safeguarding lead and two deputy designated safeguarding leads, the school has begun to address the weaknesses in safeguarding identified at the previous inspection. Staff receive regular training and updates about safeguarding. Teachers identify pupils' social and emotional barriers to learning through weekly one-to-one sessions. Pupils are empowered to voice

their concerns, enabling teachers to provide additional care and support. Leaders have quickly created a climate in which pupils feel safe and well cared for.

You and your leadership team have reviewed the curriculum and made pertinent changes to enthuse and challenge pupils. Drawing on support from the trust, visits to neighbouring schools and involvement in a project run by the Department for Education, a thematic curriculum has been introduced for every year group. Pupils develop knowledge about religious education, music, science, history and geography through the study of such themes as 'Africa'. Staff share your vision for an exciting and engaging curriculum. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this new approach to the curriculum.

You and your leadership team have reviewed the school's policies to ensure that they are up to date and implemented effectively. The leadership team meets regularly to review the school's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. With additional support provided by the MAT, you have developed and implemented a new tracking system which enables you to identify pupils who are falling behind. These pupils now receive additional individual support to catch up.

Governors pose appropriate challenge to senior leaders. An external review of governance has been carried out since the previous inspection. This provided the governing body with clarity about its role in securing improvements at the school. It also provided governors with a systematic approach to recording information discussed at meetings. Minutes of the governing body's most recent meeting demonstrate that governors ask challenging questions of leaders, particularly about the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors share your ambition for the academic and social success of all pupils.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium was carried out after the last inspection. It identified what is working well and what needs to improve to ensure that funding is used effectively. Although expenditure plans are detailed and targeted, some priorities are not focused on ensuring disadvantaged pupils' strong progress in English and mathematics.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong across all year groups. Observations of teaching demonstrated that pupils engage in learning and support each other's learning well. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, particularly in mathematics.

Employing the newly implemented tracking system, teachers use pupils' assessment information to adapt their lessons. Leaders ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments through regular internal and external moderation sessions. However, the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good across the school.

Teachers do not explicitly link the study of reading and writing in every year group. Pupils are not guided to draw on their knowledge of texts, from their reading, to inform the development of their writing. Pupils do not consistently draw on their knowledge of writing when analysing the language used by authors. The development of pupils' oracy and language skills are not fully addressed across the curriculum. Teachers do not systematically expand pupils' vocabulary and understanding of grammar to improve their reading and writing.

Pupils' misconceptions in mathematics are not consistently well addressed. Teachers are not supporting and challenging pupils well enough so that all make strong progress in their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. Many pupils are not fluent in their understanding of multiplication and division, which impedes their progress. Teachers are not developing pupils' abilities to evaluate the suitability of different mathematical approaches, when solving problems. A new approach to mathematics has recently been introduced but it is too early to judge its impact.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have ensured that the school is a positive learning environment. The school's values of respect, aspire, integrity and nurture are embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils reflect positively on their behaviour and talk openly and honestly about how they try to live the school's values. The leadership team has established a revised behaviour policy which staff are implementing consistently across the school. Through assemblies and lessons, you have ensured that pupils understand the definition of bullying. Pupils state that bullying occurs less frequently and that staff are quick to resolve it. Incidents are carefully logged and followed up. Leaders regularly analyse patterns of misbehaviour and provide additional support to address underlying issues. Since the implementation of the new behaviour policy, the number of behaviour incidents has reduced.

Pupils contribute to the development of the school's ethos through the work of the school council. Pupils, elected by their peers, are empowered to express their views. Pupils state that they feel their voices are heard and that the school provides a safe, caring environment. Through the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding, tolerance and respect for other faiths and cultures.

You and your leadership team have prioritised improvements in attendance and punctuality. The breakfast club has been instrumental in encouraging pupils' regular attendance and improving punctuality. Together with your attendance officer, you have introduced a range of approaches such as meetings with parents, weekly class awards and, when necessary, the use of fines. Overall attendance has improved slightly but is still below the national average. You are relentless in pursuing pupils who are absent for long periods of time and are meticulous in notifying the local authority.

Outcomes for pupils

The inconsistent quality of teaching and learning leads to variable rates of progress for pupils. The most able pupils do not receive sufficient challenge. Teachers do not consistently enough consider pupils' different starting points when planning lessons. As a consequence, pupils' misconceptions are not fully addressed, and pupils do not make strong enough progress across the curriculum.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and focus well in class. There is no disruptive behaviour impeding learning. You, your leadership team and governors recognise that rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and learning need to be secured so that pupils make stronger progress in every area of the curriculum.

Leaders and staff ensure that children in early years develop strong physical coordination skills. However, children are not developing strong language skills. Some activities and tasks do not support the rapid development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding.

External support

The trust has commissioned additional consultancy to review the school's work and provide further challenge and support for leaders. Buckinghamshire local authority's school improvement provision provides teaching and learning support for two teachers. Two teachers are engaged in a curriculum-focused project with the Department for Education. As a result, leaders have established effective monitoring and tracking systems and staff are developing their teaching skills.