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David Euridge and Ian Enwright
Wey House School
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Dear Mr Euridge and Mr Enwright

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wey House School

Following my visit to your school on 12 to 13 March 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 November 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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently review and sharpen safeguarding processes so that:
 - leaders and relevant staff fully understand safeguarding requirements and ensure that statutory processes are in place
 - all pupils receive their entitlement to a full-time, safe and appropriate education
 - staff's concerns, particularly those relating to child protection, are acted on promptly and appropriately
 - safer recruitment processes are observed
 - risk assessments are implemented with immediate effect, including those relating to pupils' safety
 - all staff receive an appropriate level of safeguarding training in a timely manner
 - the school's safeguarding policy meets requirements
 - staff receive sufficient training related to the behaviour management of pupils with the most complex needs, so that they can carry out their roles effectively and safely
 - inclusion is promoted strongly, and pupils are kept safe from bullying, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management and governance by making sure that:
 - a sustainable leadership, governance and teaching structure is in place
 - the school's registration status accurately reflects the provision it offers
 - pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are updated annually and the requirements of the code of practice are fully implemented
 - the school's finances are kept under watchful review and evaluated for value for money
 - the school's policies and processes are agreed, follow statutory guidance, and are kept under regular review
 - school performance information is used to inform school improvement planning more sharply
 - the curriculum meets the needs of pupils, including the targets in their EHC plans, more effectively
 - staff's training needs, attendance and job descriptions are kept under watchful

review

- the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are fully considered and applied
- the school's website meets statutory requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in all aspects of learning.

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

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

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 12 March 2019 to 13 March 2019

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector met with senior leaders, the chair of the interim executive board (IEB), the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the school business manager and two representatives of the local authority. She spoke to the local authority designated officer on the telephone. The inspector held a meeting for all teaching and non-teaching staff, 30 of whom attended. She also met several members of staff individually. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and safer recruitment of staff were checked, as were records of concerns that had been referred to the local authority.

The inspector observed pupils in lessons in all classes and at breaktime. Documentation related to pupils' behaviour and attendance was reviewed, together with information about their progress. Samples of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans were scrutinised, alongside risk assessments and positive handling plans. The inspector reviewed minutes of the IEB meetings, the local authority statement of action and the post-Ofsted action plan. She spoke to two parents on the telephone and considered the school's own surveys of parents and staff.

Context

Since the last inspection, the school has been led and managed by a team of interim senior leaders commissioned by the local authority. The interim leadership team consists of an executive headteacher, head of school and deputy head of school. A safeguarding consultant is supporting the interim senior team and the designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs). Following the last inspection, all members of the governing body resigned and an IEB was established to provide governance for the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The interim senior leadership team, together with the safeguarding consultant, have worked closely together to stabilise the school and restore order following the last inspection. These leaders are positive, forward-looking role models, who carry out their work with integrity and insight. They are providing firm and compassionate leadership for staff and pupils.

Safeguarding arrangements and processes in the school have been completely overhauled. Immediately following the section 5 inspection, local authority officers checked all referrals and records to ensure that there were no concerns that had been left without appropriate action to protect children. Leaders arranged for an emergency closure of the school, which enabled essential safeguarding and child protection training for all staff. With oversight from the local authority, the school

business manager made sure that all checks on staff working in the school were carried out in line with statutory guidance. She also reorganised all staff files and drew up an accurate and complete single central register. The school's safeguarding and child protection policy was reviewed and updated in line with guidance from the Secretary of State.

As a result of this urgent and essential work, the school's safeguarding arrangements are now secure. Staff are vigilant and know pupils well enough to identify and report concerns. They rightly feel more confident that any referrals about pupils' welfare are acted upon promptly by the DSLs. Records of concerns are carefully reviewed to ensure that pupils are not at risk. Senior leaders and DSLs are not complacent and know that recording of incidents needs to be more detailed and precise. In addition, not all staff demonstrate a deep enough understanding of the links between pupils' vulnerabilities, behaviour and safety. Leaders have wisely planned further training to enhance staff's knowledge and skill in this area.

Senior leaders have also led necessary improvements to the management of pupils' behaviour. The interim head and deputy head of school are out and about throughout the day, actively demonstrating their strong support for pupils and staff. These leaders are highly skilled in de-escalating challenging behaviour that may lead to physical or emotional harm. As a result, the use of physical intervention to manage extreme behaviour is rapidly decreasing. Pupils and staff feel safer.

Changes have been made to the school environment in order to help pupils feel safer. Leaders have reintroduced the 'calm rooms', which are non-threatening places where pupils can vent their frustrations safely with appropriate reassurance from staff. Leaders have begun work to make sure that the unwelcoming corridors are more comfortable and nurturing for pupils, by reinstalling settees and putting up displays. However, leaders and the inspector were highly conscious of the inefficient and off-putting locking and unlocking of doors along different routes through the school and in classrooms. It has been decided to fit electronic fobs to doors, but this has not yet happened. This planned improvement remains an urgent matter, together with other building works which will help pupils' safe movement around the site.

Most staff are on board with the changes that have been introduced and are positive about the impact these measures are having on pupils' welfare and behaviour. There is no doubt that staff are working extremely hard to meet interim leaders' high expectations. Some staff are making the most of their existing skills to support the school's improvement. However, a few staff are cautious about fully committing to the new regime. The turbulent and traumatic recent history of the school, together with uncertainty about the future, is leading to anxiety. For some staff, their only practice has been at this inadequate school and they do not have enough experience and belief that pupils' behaviour can change for the better. Staff are putting their faith in current leaders but some have not yet seized the opportunity to contribute wholeheartedly to improvements.

The SENCo has made it her business to ensure that all overdue reviews of pupils' EHC plans are now up to date. Plans contain helpful and detailed information about pupils' needs and backgrounds. When planning learning, teachers are expected to make use of the plans and any accompanying risk assessments and positive handling plans. However, it is too early for the SENCo and leaders to evaluate the impact on pupils' progress and welfare.

The IEB is made up of experienced leaders who have a track record in governing schools in challenging circumstances. They have made a strong start to their governance role. Their stringent scrutiny of the school's action plans and their challenging questions about the pace of change are helping to strengthen improvements.

With the local authority, members of the IEB and the interim senior team are discussing and exploring different options for academisation and the financial position of the school. All parties are keen that the current interim leaders continue their work to support the school. However, the future of the school as a sponsored academy has not yet been determined.

Leaders have not yet commissioned the review of the pupil premium, while they have been stabilising the school and ensuring pupils' safety. While this relative delay is understandable, it is important that the use of pupil premium funding is analysed precisely by its impact on pupils' outcomes.

Parents' responses to the improvements since the last inspection are mostly positive. Some parents do not communicate as closely with the school as leaders would wish. These parents have therefore not been able to be strongly involved in the work to improve the school. However, outcomes from the school's survey and the comments made to the inspector demonstrate that parental confidence is growing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

While leaders have rightly focused on making the school a safe and calm place, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not improved at the same rate. Staff have not had enough opportunities to observe better teaching, and standards remain far too low. However, there are small signs of improvement where teachers have responded positively to leaders' guidance and expectations. More consistent routines at the start of lessons are helping to set the right tone for learning. In some cases, teachers set appropriately challenging work. They know pupils well as learners and have high expectations.

In many classes, pupils are nurtured, and the most skilled staff think on their feet and take the opportunity to maximise learning opportunities. However, pupils are not making enough gains with their learning because many tasks are designed just

to keep them busy and to prevent any challenging behaviour. There is not enough careful planning about what pupils are going to learn, how activities will be managed and how to deploy teaching assistants usefully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

As the school has become a safer place, pupils' welfare has become more secure. However, this improvement is at a very early stage. Pupils' behaviour is mostly being managed by the interim senior team and there is a long way to go until all staff are equally skilled and successful. A few members of staff are supporting the interim leaders' work and can be relied upon to maintain a consistent approach.

Previous records of pupils' behaviour and instances of physical restraint were inaccurate and under-reported. However, current leaders can show that their approach is making a difference over the short time that they have been in post. Serious incidents of restrictive physical intervention and exclusion are clearly on the decline. Exclusion is considered very much as a last resort. The inspector saw strong evidence that exclusions are proportionate and issued in line with statutory guidance. Unofficial exclusion is no longer being used as a way of managing vulnerable pupils. Evidence of leaders' consistent and safe approach to managing pupils' anxieties is seen in the appropriate use of the 'calm room'. The school's records indicate that some pupils have started using the calm room for short periods of time themselves when their emotions run high. They are accompanied by a member of staff, and after a relatively short time are ready to return to class.

Pupils attending education at alternative provision are not all in the right provision for the long term. Some are not in receipt of a full-time education. However, current leaders are working as rapidly as can reasonably be expected to obtain the right provision for each pupil concerned. Senior leaders understand their accountability for these pupils while they are on the school roll.

Overall attendance figures have not been accurate in the past. However, under the current leadership, attendance is improving, while still below national figures for primary schools.

The new reward system is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and self-control. Adults' encouraging use of positive language when pupils behave well is helping to change the ethos in the school. However, it is proving hard to change pupils' use of derogatory language when they are distressed, angry or anxious. They too quickly revert to habits of racist language, abusive swearing or threats of violence to others and themselves. Interim leaders do not shirk from tackling derogatory and offensive language. They strongly believe that pupils' use of language can be changed and are taking a firm line to help pupils acquire better habits.

Outcomes for pupils

Very little has changed or improved in terms of outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. The improvements to pupils' safety, welfare, behaviour and attendance are likely to contribute to their academic and personal achievement over time. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of improvements on pupils' progress and attainment.

Leaders have sensibly focused on improving pupils' reading, and have created plentiful opportunities for pupils to read, both to an adult and for pleasure. Some pupils read fluently and sometimes expressively, although they are reluctant to show how much they actually comprehend. In some classes, pupils achieve well in mathematics. During the inspection, it was very pleasing to see how hard some Year 6 pupils worked on properties of triangles. These pupils were very well supported and challenged by their teacher. They determinedly practised their calculations and enjoyed their learning for its own sake. However, until the overall quality of teaching and learning improves, pupils will not reach their potential.

External support

The local authority acted quickly in response to the serious concerns identified at the last inspection. Officers continue to monitor the school closely as a high priority. The interim leadership team benefits from the experience and expertise of a safeguarding consultant, who works closely with the leaders who manage safeguarding and behaviour. Additional leadership has been sourced from the Wey Valley and Reigate Valley colleges to strengthen interim leadership and provide positive role models for staff. IEB members meet regularly with the local authority to review improvements and commission additional support where needed.