

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



1 April 2019

Ms Cassandra Ravenscroft  
Acting Headteacher  
Emslie Morgan Academy  
235 Leasowe Road  
Wallasey  
Merseyside  
CH45 8RE

Dear Ms Ravenscroft

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Emslie Morgan Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 5 and 6 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 2017.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not 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.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Will Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - establishing a culture of high ambition for all pupils which is communicated to and shared by everyone, including governors, leaders, staff, pupils and parents
  - making sure that there is clarity across the trust, local governing body and senior leadership team about the allocation of roles and responsibilities
  - establishing clear protocols for the sharing of information at all levels
  - making sure that the school's website meets statutory requirements and provides parents with frequent, useful information about the school and what their children are doing
  - ensuring that they have up-to-date, reliable information about key aspects of the school's performance, including pupils' academic achievement, behaviour and attendance
  - checking regularly on the progress that all the different groups of pupils make and taking swift action if any group is not achieving as well as it should
  - reviewing the school's performance regularly and using the outcomes of these reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement plan and hold senior leaders to account
  - sharpening school improvement planning so that it is more effective in driving improvement
  - building the capacity of the local governing body so that it has the skills, experience and expertise to expedite school improvement
  - providing relevant training and support for governors and senior and middle leaders to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively
  - putting in place a staffing structure which distributes responsibilities appropriately
  - providing middle leaders with the time, resources and support to ensure that they contribute to the raising of standards in their subjects across the school
  - making sure that classroom monitoring focuses on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
  - ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities with regard to the identification and assessment of pupils who may have SEN and/or disabilities
  - making sure that the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is well used, so it improves outcomes for eligible pupils
  - working with other providers to ensure that all pupils, regardless of when they join the school, are able to move on to suitable, long-term destinations to continue

their education.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all groups of pupils, especially the disadvantaged, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able, make much better progress than at present by ensuring that all teachers:
  - meet the requirements set out in the teachers’ standards
  - have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - assess pupils’ work and learning accurately and set them work which is well matched to their abilities
  - plan learning which engages and challenges pupils, particularly the most able
  - plan work which pupils find interesting and purposeful so that they develop positive attitudes to learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
  - provide opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems, think for themselves and develop fluency in the fundamentals of mathematics
  - make sure that pupils know how to improve their work and are given timely opportunities to respond to teachers’ advice and correct mistakes
  - have a secure understanding of the age group they are working with and the relevant subject knowledge
  - closely scrutinise the impact of the interventions employed to help pupils catch up, to ensure that they are making a positive difference
  - plan a cohesive curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and enables teachers to build on pupils’ prior learning across the full range of subjects
  - plan lessons effectively so that lesson time is well used to optimise pupils’ learning
  - ensure that activities are planned to develop pupils’ positive attitudes to learning and develop essential behaviours for learning, including resilience, independence and perseverance.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - taking urgent action to improve pupils’ behaviour so that pupils feel safe in school and the climate is conducive to learning
  - ensuring that there are suitable procedures in place so that pupils’ attendance improves rapidly
  - creating a culture of mutual respect and tolerance across the school
  - making sure that pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe both in school, online and in the community
  - following up assiduously on all instances of bullying.
- Take urgent action to make sure that pupils are safe by:
  - establishing a calm and orderly school environment where all pupils feel safe
  - providing training and support for all staff to equip them with the necessary skills to deal effectively with pupils’ challenging behaviour

- carrying out required checks on all staff and governors to ensure that they are suitable to work with children
- ensuring that the designated safeguarding lead has the skills, resources, support and authority to carry out the role effectively
- making sure that there are clear protocols for the sharing of sensitive personal information
- ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through a carefully planned curriculum
- liaising with the local authority to ensure that the children looked after who are on the school's roll are safe and receiving suitable education.

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 pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 5 March 2019 to 6 March 2019**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior and middle leaders. He spoke with the acting headteacher, the acting principal, the acting executive headteacher and the chair of the local governing body. He also met with the interim chief executive officer (CEO) of the Liverpool City Region Academy Trust (LCRAT), who is also a trustee. The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the executive headteacher of the St John Plessington Teaching School Alliance (SJPTSA) who is also the interim CEO of the Frank Field Education Trust (FFET). The inspector met with a group of pupils and staff. He observed teaching and learning jointly with leaders and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. He observed how pupils behaved around the school during breaktimes and between lessons.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable change at the school. The CEO of LCRAT has left the trust and has been replaced by an interim CEO. Most members of the local governing body, including its chair, have been appointed since the last inspection. Most of the previous governors have left. Following the previous inspection, the level of support provided to the school by the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust increased significantly. However, LCRAT took the decision to end the involvement of the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust during the summer term in 2018.

There have been five different headteachers since the previous inspection. The current acting headteacher was appointed in October 2018. She has been a member of staff at the school for many years. LCRAT has recently arranged for the SJPTSA to support the school. They have made a bid to the Department for Education to secure additional funding for this support. The SJPTSA arranged for additional leaders to support the acting headteacher from January 2019. The acting principal is the headteacher of Kilgarth School. The acting executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of Kilgarth School and Gillbrook School. Both leaders have substantial experience of educating pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

A number of new roles were created following the previous inspection. A new member of staff is now the head of student services. She is also a member of the senior management team and the designated leader for safeguarding. Existing members of staff also fulfil the new roles of behaviour manager and youth mentor. A permanent business manager was also appointed. She has subsequently left her role and her duties are now undertaken by a number of different staff on an interim basis. A new attendance officer has also been appointed. Two new teaching assistants have also joined the school. There have been very few changes to the school's teaching staff. A new teacher of mathematics has joined the school, as has

a teacher of physical education (PE) following the resignation of the previous PE teacher. Leaders took the decision to stop employing supply staff in April 2018.

The number of pupils on roll at the school has reduced significantly since the previous inspection. This, in part, has been caused by the local authority's decision to reduce the number of pupils that are admitted to the school.

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

Leaders' efforts to improve the school have been hampered by frequent changes to leadership and continuing uncertainties over the school's long-term future. There have been five different headteachers in the 15 months since the last inspection. These different leaders have had their own ideas and plans to improve the school. This has resulted in a bewildering range of different initiatives being introduced, that have caused confusion to both pupils and staff. As a result, leaders have not been able to significantly improve the school since the previous inspection.

There has been some improvement since the previous inspection. The members of the current leadership team, who are employed directly by the school, have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are now effective. The new interim leaders who started working at the school in January 2019 have started to improve the school's ethos and culture. They have refocused the school community on the school's values and the most pressing school priorities. They have also produced focused plans that aim to bring about rapid improvement. In the two months that they have been working at the school, there is evidence that these plans are being translated into demonstrable improvement. This is particularly in relation to pupils' behaviour.

These changes are beginning to have a positive impact on the morale of pupils and staff. Members of staff feel that new leaders have brought a clarity of vision that has not existed in the past. The new leaders are beginning to gain the trust of staff and pupils following a sustained period of turbulence.

These improvements, however, are limited and recent. The improvements that have been made to safeguarding are secure, but improvement elsewhere is fragile or non-existent. Leaders, both past and present, have only managed to scratch the surface of what needs to be done. Moreover, the school's future remains uncertain. New interim leaders have only been commissioned to work at the school on a short-term basis. In addition, leaders have been provided with no assurances about the school's long-term future.

Leaders have done little to address many of the areas for improvement that were identified at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour, although showing recent signs of improvement, remains poor, as does their attendance. Little has been done to address the inadequacies in teaching, which has resulted in pupils continuing to make very little progress. The recommended reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium have not taken place.

Trustees have not done enough to ensure that the school improves. They have been focused on supporting the school's transition to a different multi-academy trust at the expense of addressing the areas in need of urgent improvement. Although the trustees have acted decisively when they have judged external support to be ineffective, they have been unable to arrange appropriate external support for the school until the recent appointment of interim leaders.

Members of the local governing body feel that trusting and supportive relationships have recently been established with leaders for the first time. However, governors and trustees still do not receive the information that they require to hold leaders to account for the school's work. Governors lack the knowledge, skills and experience to oversee the school's work effectively. Both trustees and governors are still getting to grips with their statutory responsibilities. For example, they have not ensured that the school's website complies with current regulations. They have also not ensured that there are appropriate plans in place for the use of additional funds to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils continue to make poor progress during their time at the school.

New leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have begun to communicate their expectations to staff and pupils, which has lifted the morale of those within the school community. Despite this, the new leaders are only at the start of the journey to create a culture of high expectations. Members of staff still lack belief in pupils' capabilities. Teachers' expectations of pupils remain very low. The work that they set for pupils reflects the low expectations that they have for pupils' achievement.

New leaders have begun to clarify roles and responsibilities within the school. They have modified the staffing structure with the intention of distributing responsibilities appropriately. However, this work is in its infancy. Many staff have not undertaken training that would enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. Middle leaders have not been provided with the resources and support that would enable them to raise standards in their areas. Consequently, they are having a minimal impact on improving the school.

Due to frequent changes in systems, leaders have been unable to establish accurate and reliable methods for assessing pupils' progress and judging how well they are learning. This has hampered the ability of trustees, governors and leaders to make staff accountable for the quality of learning that takes place in the school. Leaders therefore have a very superficial understanding of how well pupils are learning, including different groups. They have therefore been unable to intervene when pupils are not learning as well as they should.

Leaders have done little to improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching remains exceptionally weak. Teachers have not been provided with opportunities to develop their practice. Leaders have done very little to monitor and evaluate the

quality of teaching and its effect on pupils' learning.

Leaders have begun to improve the arrangements for inducting new pupils into the school. For example, new pupils now complete a range of assessments that are used to ascertain their prior attainment and identify any potential special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has helped to improve the school's identification of need among new pupils. The special educational needs coordinator has also ensured that some pupils who have been at the school for a longer period are now having their needs assessed. However, there is still a large number of pupils who are likely to have unidentified and unmet needs.

Leaders have done little to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need to move to suitable, long-term destinations. Leaders have not taken action to improve the school's curriculum. They have not ensured that the school offers different packages of support for pupils in different situations. For example, the school does not have a pathway for pupils who are identified as having the potential to return to mainstream education within a relatively short period of time. It is therefore exceptional for pupils to leave the school before the end of Year 11 for a suitable destination.

The improvements that leaders have made to safeguarding are more secure. The school now carries out all required checks on all staff and governors to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Those pupils spoken to said that they feel safe at school. However, they acknowledged that this has not always been the case. They indicated that the behaviour of some pupils posed a health and safety risk to others in the past.

Pupils report that the site is much calmer than in the past. Observations of pupils' behaviour around the site confirm that many pupils conduct themselves in a calm and appropriate manner. However, despite these improvements, there are still too many incidents of pupils banging unnecessarily on doors, walls and windows. The number of damaged doors and windows reflects the high level of vandalism that continues at the school. Recent training has made a positive difference to the ability of staff to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. There are signs that staff are becoming more skilled at de-escalating situations where pupils feel anxious and/or distressed.

The new designated leader for safeguarding has received the training and time that has enabled her to significantly strengthen the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The systems for staff to report concerns to leaders are now fit for purpose. The leader for safeguarding follows up on all concerns assiduously. The school now works effectively with a range of external agencies, including those that provide advice and guidance on issues relating to relationships. Many of these organisations had stopped sending their staff to the school due to concerns for their personal safety. However, they have started visiting the school again. They are making a positive contribution to pupils being able to manage risk for themselves. These visits from external organisations complement the improvements that have



been made to the 'personal development' curriculum. This has increased pupils' awareness of how to stay safe and live healthily. The local authority indicate that they no longer have any concerns about the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The school has established clear and appropriate protocols for sharing sensitive personal information about pupils. Information is only shared with those staff who need to know. The information that staff now receive on each pupil is focused on how they can address pupils' educational, social and emotional needs. The school works closely with the local authority. This ensures that pupils not in receipt of full-time education, including those who are looked after, are safe and receiving suitable education.

The school has strengthened arrangements for ensuring that the very large proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school are safe when they are not in school. There are robust systems in place for ascertaining the whereabouts of absent pupils. There are also clear, long-term strategies to improve the attendance of those who are regularly absent.

Despite the improvements that have been made to safeguarding, the school premises are still not conducive to keeping pupils safe. Many of the windows are rotten and are potentially hazardous. Moreover, the school's layout does not facilitate the provision of effective support for pupils who experience challenges with their behaviour.

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

Leaders have not paid enough attention to the development of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, this aspect of the school's work has improved very little. There is no evidence to indicate that pupils are making significantly better progress than at the time of the previous inspection.

The quality of teaching remains very poor. Teachers do not consistently meet the expectations laid out in the teachers' standards. Teachers still have very low expectations of pupils. They do not provide pupils with work that provides sufficient challenge. The needs of the most able pupils, in particular, are not met.

The teaching of mathematics continues to be very weak. Pupils are not challenged in this subject. They are not provided with opportunities to develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills. The teaching of English has also not improved. Pupils are not supported to develop the accuracy and fluency of their writing. Teachers give little consideration to what pupils learn or the order in which they learn it. Pupils quickly lose interest and become disengaged.

Leaders and teachers have not developed the curriculum in each subject since the last inspection. As a result, the curriculum continues to lack cohesion. Pupils are not helped to systematically develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject.

Teachers do not assess pupils effectively. They do not provide pupils with regular and meaningful opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Moreover, teachers have not taken part in training that would enable them to assess pupils' learning accurately. Teachers do not consistently apply the school's policy for assessing pupils' work and providing feedback. This contributes to pupils' lack of understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Many teachers do not have the subject knowledge to teach pupils effectively. They lack the knowledge and understanding of how to teach their subjects well. This has contributed to teachers' continuing inability to meet pupils' needs.

Given the limitations in assessment, teachers are unable to identify which pupils require additional support to catch up and make greater progress. Little is done to help those pupils who are falling behind.

Many teachers do not ensure that lesson time is used well. Too much teaching still fails to engage pupils. As a result, pupils often misbehave, which disrupts teaching and the learning of others. Leaders have not ensured that a consistent approach has been adopted to develop positive attitudes to learning among pupils. Consequently, pupils frequently become bored and frustrated in lessons and give up on their work.

Teachers lack the knowledge, skills and understanding to be able to teach pupils with SEND effectively.

There are pockets of more effective teaching, particularly in food technology, science and physical education. Due to the improvements that have been made to some aspects of pupils' behaviour, some pupils are completing more work than in the past. Some pupils are also showing greater pride in the way that they present their work.

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

Different leaders have introduced a number of contrasting systems to manage pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. These systems have exacerbated the lack of stability at the school and contributed to the continuing sense of crisis that engulfed the school until recently. Staff and pupils report that regular changes unsettled pupils further, which undermined the efforts being made to improve pupils' behaviour.

Despite this, there are clear signs that pupils' behaviour has improved over the last few months. Those pupils spoken to during the inspection indicated that they feel that behaviour has improved significantly. They told the inspector that the number of incidents of very poor behaviour has decreased markedly. Staff also report that pupils' behaviour has shown significant signs of improvement.

Pupils also told the inspector that they value their relationships with members of staff. Almost all pupils spoken to indicated that they would feel comfortable speaking to a member of staff about any worries or concerns that they might have. The behaviour of many pupils demonstrates the increasing respect that they have for adults, each other and themselves. Those pupils who attend regularly are becoming more tolerant and accepting of others, including those who are different from themselves.

Pupils are responding positively to the new systems that leaders have recently established to encourage and reward good behaviour. For example, pupils find the opportunity to win 'social time' particularly motivating. They can choose to undertake activities such as playing pool, going to the gym or making art at the end of each day. Staff have also undertaken recent training to help them to manage pupils' behaviour more effectively and de-escalate situations where pupils feel anxious or distressed. However, pupils said that most of their lessons are still disrupted by poor behaviour. Rates of fixed-term exclusion have increased due to continuing poor behaviour, such as acts of vandalism and aggressive behaviour towards members of staff. There are still too many instances of pupils causing disruption and behaving inappropriately around the site when they should be in lessons.

Rates of attendance have declined further since the previous inspection. On a typical day, approximately one half of pupils attend school. Moreover, all but a small handful of pupils are persistently absent from school. Punctuality to school is also a continuing cause for concern. Pupils summed this up to the inspector when they said that 'barely anyone comes in and those that do are late'. Despite this, leaders have strengthened their procedures to challenge unnecessary absence. For example, they have taken parents and carers to court for the absence of their children. They have also started to work more productively with external agencies to devise appropriate plans to get individual pupils into school more regularly.

Leaders have improved their work in relation to bullying. They have ensured that staff and pupils share a more comprehensive understanding of different types of bullying. They have also improved the systems that are used to report and record incidents of bullying. Leaders' records show that there was a sharp increase in the amount of reported bullying in the first few months of the current school year. Leaders can demonstrate that the amount of reported bullying has decreased significantly since then. This, in part, is due to the very thorough and appropriate measures that are taken to address all incidents of reported bullying. Pupils confirm that instances of bullying are now rare.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

There is no evidence to indicate that pupils are making significantly better progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The qualifications attained by the group of Year 11 pupils who left the school in the summer of 2018 reflected the inadequate progress that they had made during their time at the school. Pupils

attained, on average, fewer than two GCSE qualifications each. Pupils also achieved very few qualifications in addition to the limited number of GCSEs that were attained. Only a very small proportion of pupils achieved a standard pass in any GCSE subject, which reflected the poor progress that had been made, especially by the most able pupils.

Leaders are unaware of the proportion of pupils who left Year 11 at the end of the last school year who are not in education, employment or training. However, their evidence from the start of the current school year indicates that at least one quarter of pupils are not likely to be in education, employment or training. This reflects their poor preparation for life after school.

Leaders are still establishing systems that will enable them to evaluate how much progress pupils are making. At present, they are unaware of how well pupils are learning. This is because of the different and incompatible systems that have been introduced since the previous inspection to help leaders to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. Moreover, teachers have not received appropriate support that would enable them to assess pupils' learning in their areas meaningfully and accurately. Observations of teaching and a scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that pupils' needs are still not being met. Pupils continue to make very limited progress.

The school has been unsuccessful at moving a significant number of pupils to suitable long-term destinations. This is because leaders have not modified the curriculum to enable them to ascertain what destinations would be most suitable for different pupils. Leaders have also failed to establish the productive working relationships with leaders of other schools that would enable them to secure placements for pupils that would be in their best long-term interests. As a result, most pupils continue to remain at the school until the end of Year 11, whether it is the best thing for them or not.

### **External support**

External support for the school has lacked continuity since the previous inspection. LCRAT took the decision to end the support provided by the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust. This was because they felt that they were not addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection quickly enough. Members of staff report that the number of different headteachers contributed to a continuing sense of crisis in the 11 months following the last inspection.

The school received limited external support between May and December 2018. This was because LCRAT was focused on addressing the school's long-term future rather than sorting out the immediate challenges facing the school. The new temporary leaders who joined the school in January 2019 have had an immediate impact. Staff report that they have provided the school with a clarity of purpose that has not existed previously. Both staff and pupils say that morale is higher than it has been in a long time. There are already signs that pupils' behaviour is beginning to improve under the direction of the new leaders. They have begun to improve

training for staff, by providing them with opportunities to work with colleagues from Kilgarth School and Gillbrook School. However, given the recent nature of the new leaders' involvement, their impact on some of the most entrenched issues, such as poor attendance and weaknesses in teaching, has been negligible.