

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Gemma Simon
Principal
Hillsview Academy
Normanby Road
South Bank
Middlesbrough
TS6 9AG

Dear Mrs Simon

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hillsview Academy

Following my visit with Sarah MacDermott, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 19-20 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 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 May 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 not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Leaders and governors should take action to rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing and strengthening leadership at all levels so that all leaders are effectively evaluating the success of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils
 - monitoring and evaluating the use of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up so that spending is precisely targeted and improves outcomes for these pupils.
- Leaders and governors should improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of all pupils, so that all pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - improving and embedding the new behaviour system so that it is applied consistently by all teachers and disruption to learning rapidly reduces
 - implementing an effective whole-school literacy strategy so that pupils improve their spelling, punctuation, reading and extended writing.
- Leaders and governors should urgently improve attendance, behaviour and pupil welfare by:
 - eradicating internal truancy and preventing pupils from smoking on site
 - reducing the number of behaviour incidents and fixed-term exclusions
 - reducing persistent absence and improving attendance for all groups of pupils, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, and for students in the sixth form
 - improving the quality of the provision for personal, social, health and economic education so that all pupils in the school and students in the sixth form receive education to prepare them for their futures.
- Leaders and governors should take urgent action to ensure that safeguarding is effective by:
 - ensuring that records of bullying, attendance issues and referrals are detailed and reference action taken and associated impact
 - ensuring that pupils move safely around the building without running, pushing or shoving.

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 fifth monitoring inspection on 19-20 March 2019

Evidence

During the monitoring inspection, meetings were held with middle and senior leaders. Inspectors visited lessons in a range of subjects and year groups. Some of these visits took place with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books during lessons. An inspector also scrutinised pupils' books with two members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also met formally with pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. The lead inspector met with the national director of secondary schools for the Academies Enterprise Trust, the chair of the governing board and a governor. A telephone conversation was held with the designated officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation.

Context

There have been no new teaching appointments since the previous monitoring inspection. Plans are progressing towards re-brokerage to a new trust. Leaders are working proactively to support plans to re-broker.

There will be no students in the sixth form in the next academic year.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the appointment of the principal, the school has improved. The principal is tireless in her determination to improve the school further. She has ensured that leaders are addressing the areas for improvement with increasing pace. However, as the areas for improvement were not addressed at an early enough stage, the actions taken have not had a significant and substantial effect in raising standards. There still remains work to do towards the removal of special measures.

The trust has ensured that governance has been strengthened since the previous section 5 inspection. Governors provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders. For instance, minutes of governing board meetings show that governors challenge leaders to reduce exclusions further and improve attendance. Governors regularly visit the school to check progress against the actions in the school improvement plan. The national director of secondary schools for the trust attends governing board meetings with governors to ensure that leaders are held to account.

Since the last monitoring inspection, the special educational needs coordinator has ensured that targets to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are more precise. This is improving the provision for pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator has developed effective systems to monitor and evaluate the progress and attendance of pupils with SEND. As a

result, there are some signs of improvement in the attendance of pupils with SEND. However, the number of pupils with SEND who are regularly absent from school remains high.

Middle leaders regularly review work in pupils' books and observe learning. However, some middle leaders continue to have an overgenerous view of the effect of actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers' expectations of pupils are still not high enough in some subjects such as science.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Since the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have introduced a new literacy policy. Teachers are addressing pupils' spelling errors more consistently. However, inspectors found that many pupils continue to spell key subject-specific words incorrectly.

The presentation policy used in mathematics has now been extended to all subjects. Pupils' presentation is beginning to show signs of improvement. However, pupils' presentation remains variable. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation are not high enough in key stage 3 science.

The quality of teaching continues to improve in subjects such as humanities. As a result, pupils engage more positively in their learning. When activities are too easy, pupils become distracted and this leads to low-level disruption. The quality of teachers' questioning varies. However, in lessons where pupils demonstrate more positive attitudes towards their learning, teachers encourage pupils to explain the reasons for their answers during class discussions.

The quality of teaching in science is poor and has not improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Leaders agree that action needs to be taken more quickly to address this. As a result, the trust is arranging for additional support to improve teaching and pupils' progress in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school site, including during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Staff deal with any incidents of misbehaviour swiftly.

Most pupils are punctual to school and arrive to their lessons on time. However, during the inspection there were some pupils wandering around corridors during lesson time. There are a number of 'on-call' staff on corridors during lesson time to deal with pupils who are out of lessons.

Pupils, who made their views known to inspectors, are unequivocal in their view that behaviour has improved since the appointment of the current principal. However, pupils' attitudes to learning are proving harder to shift, particularly in key

stage 3. A number of pupils said that their learning continues to be disrupted by the poor behaviour of other pupils.

The number of pupils removed from lessons remains high. Inspectors observed pupils being sent out of lessons because of disruptive or defiant behaviour. When pupils are sent out of lessons to work in another classroom they are not typically given work to undertake. This leads to gaps in their learning. In science, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, too many pupils demonstrate poor attitudes towards their learning in their science lessons.

Leaders have prioritised reducing the number of pupils who are given fixed-term exclusions from school. The number of fixed-term exclusions has halved compared to the same time last year. However, fixed-term exclusions remain more than three times above the national average. The number of pupils permanently excluded from the school remains too high.

Leaders have introduced new systems and procedures to tackle the high rates of pupil absence. Pupils' attendance is showing signs of improvement. Nevertheless, improving pupils' attendance remains a main priority, in particular reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school. Although rates of attendance remain too low, leaders are tackling this with increasing pace and urgency.

Most pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. However, pupils have mixed views about how staff deal with incidents of bullying. Most pupils told inspectors that bullying incidents are dealt with effectively by staff. However, some pupils do not feel that staff deal with incidents of bullying quickly enough. The school keeps detailed records of bullying incidents and actions taken.

The school has a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme (PSHEE). This is delivered through tutor time. In addition, there are three days per year where the normal timetable is suspended and pupils focus on a particular aspect of the PSHEE programme. Although leaders have reviewed the delivery of PSHEE, pupils do not feel there is enough time to discuss topics and issues. Inspectors agree. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have little opportunity to learn about different religions. Inspectors found that pupils have a very limited understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and the importance of British values. However, pupils talk positively about the work of the school council to raise the profile of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. This is an improvement since the previous monitoring inspection.

The principal has placed high importance on raising pupils' aspirations. For instance, some pupils are involved in an inspiring women's programme, others are involved in mentoring and coaching programmes. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and experiences.

Outcomes for pupils

The school's assessment information, and inspection evidence, show that Year 11 pupils are making better progress, particularly higher prior attaining pupils. Pupils demonstrate more positive attitudes to learning in Year 11 compared to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils' progress in science is typically poor because of weak teaching.

Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is beginning to have some effect. There is some evidence of progress gaps reducing between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Year 11.

Funding to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in English is being used effectively to improve pupils' reading. However, funding to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in mathematics has not been used well. Leaders have only recently started to implement plans to support these pupils.

External support

At the time of the monitoring inspection the school is receiving no external support. Support from the school is provided by the trust. For instance, the trust funds a system leader to work in the school for three days per week. This provides some effective additional leadership capacity to support senior leaders. The national director of secondary schools, in collaboration with the principal, has commissioned support from the trust's curriculum specialists in some subjects. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning in subjects, such as humanities.