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2 May 2019

Mrs Christine Fraser
The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning
Churchill Road
Bentley
Walsall
West Midlands
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Dear Mrs Fraser,

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning

Following my visit with Ann Pritchard, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 9 to 10 April 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 improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher in physical education 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 Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Yates

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Immediately address safeguarding concerns by:
 - improving the monitoring and support given to pupils with low levels of attendance, involving wider external agencies as required
 - working with the local authority to ensure that any pupils that should be admitted to the school are supported to do so
 - urgently reviewing the support given to pupils on reduced timetables so that they can return to full-time learning as soon as possible
 - auditing the health needs of all pupils and establishing, where necessary, risk assessments that fully set out how staff should respond to any potential symptoms or risks
 - renewing physical intervention training for staff within locally agreed timescales
 - ensuring that records of any physical intervention are completed in full by staff
 - making sure that concerns raised about pupils are fully addressed and recorded by the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - the serious concerns relating to safeguarding are immediately addressed with the support of the local authority
 - senior leaders fully evaluate the effectiveness of the school and use this information to prioritise the actions required to secure improvement
 - governors work with the local authority to build greater capacity in leadership and halt the decline in safety and standards
 - governors ensure that senior leaders are provided with a much greater level of challenge and support, and that leaders' actions are carefully monitored for impact
 - the school's website fully meets the requirements set by the department for education
 - the whole workforce has higher expectations of pupils, and that they take pride in their school and adopt a more united approach
 - the overall standard of the school environment is enhanced so that it is clean, appealing and inviting for pupils to learn in
 - teachers receive regular feedback about their practice and are provided with a comprehensive menu of training that addresses the school's key priorities

- staff work together to review the impact that the curriculum has on pupils' learning.
- Improve teaching and learning, and thereby outcomes for pupils, by making sure that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - new assessment systems are fully embedded and understood by teachers
 - information about what pupils can do, and what they need to get better at, is used effectively to plan for learning
 - teachers' planning in the wider curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and skills progressively over time
 - the priorities identified in pupils' education, health and care plans are used to inform day-to-day teaching.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - taking greater account of the government's careers guidance and establishing a clearer strategy for future development
 - embedding the improved systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' behaviour
 - more closely meeting the needs of pupils' learning in the school's 'bases'.
- Improve provision in the sixth form by:
 - evaluating what is and isn't effective
 - establishing clearer strategic direction and leadership
 - ensuring programmes of study build on learners' prior skills and offer a higher level of challenge
 - promoting learners' independence skills and offering a much stronger level of careers education.

A review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

A review of pupil premium funding is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 9 April 2019 to 10 April 2019

Evidence

Inspectors met with the acting interim headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, parents, members of the interim executive board (IEB) and representatives from the local authority. An inspector spoke on the telephone with the school's independent adviser.

Accompanied by senior leaders, inspectors visited lessons on both days of the inspection and looked at work in pupils' books. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and observed behaviour in lessons and during social times.

An inspector visited one of the school's post-16 providers and met with a group of students and two of their tutors.

Various documents were evaluated, including the school's action plan and self-evaluation, minutes of the IEB's meetings, safeguarding information and policies. Information about attendance, behaviour and safety was also analysed. Inspectors checked the school's website and the single central record, which provides information on safeguarding checks on staff, and staff recruitment information.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been considerable changes to the leadership structure. Following the inspection, the local authority put in place an interim leadership team from November 2018 until February half-term 2019. This consisted of two headteachers from local schools, one leading the school for two days per week and the other headteacher leading the school for three days per week. The deputy headteacher provided additional support for one day per week as acting headteacher.

After February half-term, a headteacher from another local school took up the post of acting interim headteacher. The deputy headteacher resumed her previous position. An acting deputy headteacher, an acting assistant headteacher, an acting deputy designated safeguarding lead and an acting behaviour mentor also joined the school at this time.

In February 2019, the local authority dissolved the governing body and put into place an IEB.

An academy order was issued in February 2019. Two potential sponsors have been identified.

Currently there are 16 members of staff on long-term absence. The weekly average number of supply staff filling these positions is 20.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since taking up her post in February 2019, the acting interim headteacher has quickly established herself within the school and has developed positive working relationships with members of the IEB, the deputy headteacher and staff within the school. She has galvanised the staff and, together with the strengthened leadership team and experienced members of the IEB, has made some significant changes in order to instigate the necessary improvements across the school. These have been achieved in a very short amount of time. However, the school improvement journey is still at an early stage. While it is clear that there are improvements in some aspects of the school's performance, such as safeguarding and behaviour, some key weaknesses remain.

The recommendation from the previous inspection for a review of governance is no longer needed as the governing body has been replaced with an IEB.

The IEB is beginning to make a difference. Its members are fully committed to their role. Between them, they have a wide range of skills and are using these effectively to strike an appropriate balance between challenge and support for leaders. Evidence from minutes of meetings shows that members hold leaders to account for the performance of the school. However, there is also evidence of effective support. For example, the chair of the board is supporting the headteacher with the management of staff absence and another member is working with the local authority to look at the funding allocated to pupils' education, health and care plans. This support is giving the headteacher more time to focus on school improvement priorities.

The school's action plan accurately identifies the overarching priorities for improvement. However, as a result of the significant changes since the last inspection, such as changes in leadership, it is not meeting school improvement needs fully. Leaders need to refine the school's action plan so that it more accurately reflects the current school improvement targets and the timescales in which they should be achieved.

Leaders cannot say how effectively additional funding is used, because there is no evaluation of the impact of the funding. Current plans for the use of additional funding are not fit for purpose. For example, there is no clear overview of how well disadvantaged pupils are currently achieving. This area has been prioritised by leaders and the recommended review of the pupil premium is due to take place in May 2019.

The school's website fully meets the requirements set by the department for education.

A curriculum review, led by the deputy headteacher and in consultation with staff, has resulted in a curriculum that meets pupils' needs well. It is broad and balanced. Pupils say they enjoy studying a range of subjects and welcome the return of music

lessons.

Leaders, with support from the local authority, have made significant improvements in the arrangements for safeguarding. Safeguarding is effective. The capacity in the leadership of safeguarding has been strengthened. Priorities for actions have been effectively addressed. These include appropriate staff training, including on induction, the introduction of an effective recording system and filtering of the internet.

Record-keeping for the recruitment of staff is thorough and precise. Pupils' records are well organised and securely stored. The school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks meets requirements. It is monitored regularly by senior leaders and the chair of the IEB.

While pupils' attendance remains low, systems and procedures for monitoring attendance are well established. The number of pupils on part-time timetables has significantly reduced. On the rare occasions when they are used, they are reviewed regularly and used appropriately.

The use of physical restraint has also significantly reduced. On the rare occasions it is used, it is used appropriately. Records are completed in full and timely action is taken by leaders.

Health and medical care plans for pupils with the most complex needs have been completed and the information has been shared with staff. However, leaders are aware that some plans need updating and arrangements are in place with the school nursing team for this to be addressed early in the summer term.

The school environment has been enhanced and is now clean and appealing. Staff have worked hard to make the school a stimulating learning environment. The high quality of pupils' work on display, for example in art, shows the pride that pupils take in their work. Pupils value the improvements made to the school building and say how clean and bright it is.

Staff morale is high. Staff say they feel proud to work at the school and feel supported and listened to. They value the feedback they are receiving from leaders and are endeavouring to improve their practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. While there are pockets of good practice, for example in the primary phase and in physical education, too much weak practice is still evident. Where teaching is effective there is a strong focus on developing communication. As a result, pupils are able to verbalise their learning at every opportunity.

Some highly effective support staff provide pupils with care, guidance and support to enable them to be fully involved in their learning. Where this is the case, opportunities for learning are maximised. For example, during snack time, support staff encourage pupils to count the number of biscuits on their plate to reinforce

learning from their numeracy lessons. However, the effectiveness of support staff is inconsistent.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching and have clearly identified how to improve it.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The school is calm and orderly. Relationships between pupils and adults are purposeful. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs. The introduction of a classroom called 'the zone', where pupils go for time-out when they are feeling upset or anxious, is helping pupils to manage their behaviour. As a result, the number of reported incidents of disruptive behaviour has significantly decreased. Fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately and there has been a marked decrease in the number of both fixed-term exclusions and repeat exclusions.

Impartial careers guidance is provided by an external adviser. However, this is the only guidance that pupils receive from Year 9 onwards. There is little or no other advice or guidance provided to help pupils consider the next steps in their education, employment or training. Careers advice and guidance have been planned into the personal, social, health and economic education programme that will be delivered from Year 7 upwards next term. Post-16 students receive some careers advice at their alternative provision but currently do not have the opportunity to attend work experience placements.

Outcomes for pupils

Although new assessment systems were introduced in September 2018, staff have not used this system since January 2019. As a result, there is currently no clear overview of pupils' attainment or progress in any subject or key stage.

Leaders have analysed the assessment information that was available from the autumn term. This shows that pupils' progress in English and mathematics is weak.

Leaders have prioritised the development of assessment systems as a matter of urgency. Detailed plans are in place and staff have received some initial training on the new system that will be introduced in the summer term.

16 to 19 study programmes

In February 2019, post-16 provision was transferred to a range of alternative providers. Leaders involved parents and carers in the transition arrangements. Although leaders handled the transition sensitively, it did present challenges for some students. Leaders have taken all possible steps to minimise the disruption to the students' education. As a result, the majority of students have settled well into

their new settings. Nevertheless, a small number of students are not currently receiving education. Leaders are working to address this, with alternative arrangements for these students being explored.

External support

Leaders have engaged particularly well with the local authority to utilise the expertise of the officers to further improve safeguarding and attendance policies and procedures. The local authority has also helped to source alternative placements for post-16 students.