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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 with Christopher Crouch, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 May 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2018. 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 taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of

trustees, the executive headteacher of the multi-academy trust (MAT), 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 second monitoring inspection on 14 May 2019 to 15 May 2019

Evidence

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

Context

There have been no changes to staffing at the school since the last monitoring visit. There have been no changes to the status of the school since the last monitoring visit.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

This monitoring inspection report confirms that school leaders and governors have continued to work hard to address the findings from the previous inspection. However, senior leaders and governors acknowledge the need to embed recently established teaching, learning and assessment strategies so that the impact on pupils' achievements is sustained.

Leaders and staff work collaboratively to ensure the implementation of the statement of action. The headteacher's vision for sustained and rapid improvement is shared by staff. Leaders have established clear systems for embedding the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Having accurately identified the barriers to pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics, leaders have introduced pertinent, ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants. Leaders monitor and evaluate improvements through lesson observations, scrutiny of work in books, discussions with pupils and staff, and analysis of pupils' assessment information. These activities enable leaders to accurately identify where further support is needed, informing training provided for staff. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last monitoring visit. However, you acknowledge that these improvements are relatively recent and not yet fully embedded in every year group.

The strategic plan for English and mathematics is now clear and explicit. The leadership team and the MAT have rightly prioritised improvements to the teaching, learning and assessment of English and mathematics. The leadership team has revised the curriculum for English and mathematics to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The study of high-quality texts has been

introduced in English, such as 'Cosmic' by Frank Cottrell Boyce in Year 5. You have ensured that pupils' acquisition of vocabulary and the development of their language skills are embedded in the study of these texts. Pupils were observed enthusiastically practising the vocabulary they are learning. In addition, you have prioritised reading for pleasure in every year group. Consequently, there is a buzz about reading around the school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the high-quality books they are reading. For example, pupils in Year 2 are currently reading 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C.S. Lewis. However, you acknowledge that changes to the English curriculum are relatively new and will need time to have sustained impact.

In mathematics, the leadership team has introduced strategies in all classes to address gaps in pupils' knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Using information about pupils' achievements, leaders have adapted the curriculum to ensure that all pupils have secure knowledge and understanding. However, teachers are not consistently using assessment information to plan mathematics lessons that ensure sufficient challenge for the most able and appropriate support for low prior attaining pupils. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in mathematics.

You have secured improvements in the school's safeguarding arrangements. Staff continue to receive regular safeguarding updates. Designated safeguarding leads provide effective support for vulnerable pupils, enabling them to access the curriculum successfully and confidently. For example, the designated safeguarding leads ensure that children looked after receive personalised support that is effective and reviewed regularly. Pupils told inspectors that staff demonstrate high levels of care for their emotional and physical well-being. They also told inspectors that they could approach a member of staff if they have a concern. The culture of safeguarding throughout the school is strong.

Senior leaders responsible for improving behaviour have worked hard to address pupils' misbehaviour. Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils learn about the school's values of 'respect, aspire, integrity and nurture' and are able to talk about them knowledgeably. Pupils behave well, both in the classroom and around the school. You provide additional support for pupils with complex social and emotional needs to enable them to regulate their behaviour and engage with learning.

Following the last monitoring visit, leaders have further refined the thematic curriculum for each year group. Drawing on support from the MAT, alongside visits to neighbouring schools, leaders have revised the curriculum plans to enrich and deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects, including music and modern foreign languages. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these revisions.

The leadership team meets regularly to review the school's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. In addition, it monitors and

reviews the impact of recent changes to the curriculum in English and mathematics. Using the new tracking system, leaders track the progress of pupils closely and provide additional support where necessary.

Governors pose pertinent challenge to senior leaders. Governors are clear about their role in driving improvements at the school. They are highly ambitious for the social and academic success of the pupils. Minutes of the governing body's most recent meeting record governors' challenging questions to leaders, particularly about the use of pupil premium funding and its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Since the last monitoring visit, expenditure plans have been revised to ensure a more stringent focus on strengthening the progress of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Since the first monitoring visit, teaching, learning and assessment have continued to improve. Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong across all year groups. Observations of teaching and discussions with pupils demonstrate that pupils enjoy learning and are ambitious to succeed. Relationships between staff and pupils are particularly strong. Leaders' evaluations of teaching, learning and assessment are accurate. Staff receive valuable feedback about their work and are provided with pertinent training and guidance. Leaders have established a coherent strategic plan for improving the quality of teaching across the curriculum and all year groups. However, this is not yet fully embedded.

As a result of the revised English curriculum, teachers are making more explicit links between reading and writing. Pupils are supported to read high-quality texts and to evaluate how writers select language to create specific effects. Pupils have greater opportunities, in some classes, to use their newly acquired language skills in their writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 were observed selecting ambitious vocabulary when writing about characters from the Russian folk tale 'Firebird'. Within the revised English curriculum, teachers employ drama, art and dance to enrich pupils' understanding of language, and the themes and ideas in texts. As a result, pupils in some classes write with improved skill and read with greater understanding. However, this is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Since the last monitoring visit, teachers and teaching assistants have received additional training in how to improve pupils' achievements in mathematics. To support the teaching of mathematics, staff now have access to a breadth of newly purchased resources. Employing a range of strategies, teachers focus on developing pupils' knowledge and application of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to problem solving. Pupils respond well and are eager to improve the speed and accuracy with which they complete mathematical calculations. Lesson

observations and scrutiny of pupils' books demonstrate that pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 are more secure in their understanding of addition and subtraction but many pupils continue to struggle with multiplication and division. However, teachers do not consistently use pupils' assessment information to plan sequences of lessons that challenge the most able and sufficiently support low prior attaining pupils. Consequently, pupils do not make strong progress across the school.

Although pupils develop their knowledge in history, geography and science, they do not develop consistently strong subject-specific skills of analysis and evaluation. For example, in all year groups, pupils have limited opportunities to formulate hypotheses, conduct experiments and evaluate their findings in science.

The quality of education in the early years setting continues to be variable. In the Nursery, staff develop children's language and communications skills fairly well. Children respond well to the range of activities and tasks which enable them to develop their understanding of the world around them. However, staff do not systematically structure tasks and activities to strengthen children's language and communications skills in Reception. Consequently, children in Reception do not communicate confidently and articulately. Staff do not embed reading, writing and mathematical learning in the planned tasks and activities. As a result, children are not immersed in a rich curriculum that prepares them well for Year 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' improved behaviour has been sustained since the last monitoring visit. Leaders have maintained the positive learning environment throughout the school. Through the curriculum and assemblies, the importance of positive behaviour for learning is reinforced. Staff are implementing the revised behaviour policy well, ensuring that positive behaviour is rewarded and that sanctions are applied appropriately. Leaders provide additional support such as counselling to pupils with complex needs to enable them to regulate their behaviour. However, although the number of behaviour incidents has continued to decline since the Section 5 inspection, pupils spoke of difficulties with resolving friendship issues.

Through the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to learn about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Pupils also learn how to keep safe when online and the importance of doing so. Pupils feel empowered to voice their concerns and enjoy positive, nurturing relationships with staff. In addition, pupils demonstrate a pride in their learning. Pupils' books are generally well presented, with joined handwriting.

Overall attendance has improved, although it remains below the national average. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. The breakfast club continues to be instrumental in encouraging pupils to attend school more frequently. As noted at the previous monitoring visit, the attendance officer collates information about pupils' absence, analyses the results and provides frequent reports to leaders. However, persistent absence continues to be a concern

and has not improved. Leaders have imposed fines on parents and carers for persistent absence, as well as highlighting the importance of good attendance through rewards, assemblies and discussions with parents. Leaders have not made clear to a minority of parents the link between attendance and their children's academic and social success.

Outcomes for pupils

Since the previous monitoring visit, pupils in most classes have made stronger progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are higher and improving. The accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils has improved. Leaders review the pupils' progress regularly to identify where additional support is needed. However, teachers do not consistently use pupils' assessments to plan sequences of lessons that ensure pupils make strong progress.

In many classes, pupils' knowledge of how writers use language to create characters, settings and build tension has improved. In many classes, pupils' greater understanding of the impact of their language choices is evident in the quality of their writing for different purposes, audiences and text types. However, these improvements are not yet consistently embedded across the school.

Pupils' misconceptions about addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are being addressed through the mathematics curriculum. In most classes, pupils are more confident when calculating and solving problems using addition and subtraction. However, many pupils are not yet secure in their understanding and application of multiplication and division. Consequently, they are not able to solve more complex mathematical problems.

In the early years, leaders and staff develop children's physical coordination well through a range of tasks and activities. However, children do not make strong progress in the development of their language and communication skills in Reception. Additionally, children do not make strong progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of mathematics, reading and writing. Consequently, children are not well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.