

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Gary Corbett  
Headteacher  
Langham Oaks  
School Road  
Langham  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO4 5PA

Dear Mr Corbett

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Langham Oaks**

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school was judged 'requires improvement' at its previous section 5 inspection in February 2018. The inspection also evaluated the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Senior leaders and the trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good. Safeguarding is effective.

The school should take further action to:

- implement and evaluate fully the planned changes to the curriculum to ensure that it fully supports pupils' engagement with learning and meets their needs and aspirations
- continue to work with alternative providers to develop programmes of study so that the most disengaged pupils participate fully in education and are supported to achieve qualifications appropriate to their capabilities

- ensure that all staff consistently use the school's approach to managing behaviour so that incidents leading to fixed-period exclusions and use of sanctions reduce rapidly.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and director of academy improvement of SEAX multi-academy trust (the trust), and a school effectiveness partner from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I also held telephone conversations with the chair of the trust board, the CEO of Beckmead Family of Schools, a representative of the local authority and a parent to gather their views on the school. The school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans were evaluated. I also scrutinised external reviews of the school, including a review of governance and a review of pupil premium funding. I made short visits to a number of lessons and intervention sessions with you, the associate headteacher and the deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning, scrutinise pupils' work and hear their views on the school. I observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime to check on their safety. Documentation, policies and records relating to the school's work to keep pupils safe were reviewed.

## **Context**

There have been a number of changes to the senior leadership team, staffing and governance arrangements since the previous inspection. The previous headteacher left her post at the end of the summer term in 2018. You took up post in September 2018. During this academic year, a deputy headteacher has left the school. An associate headteacher and a seconded deputy headteacher have joined you to form the current senior leadership team. There have been changes in leadership of the trust since the previous inspection. A new chair of the trust board and new CEO are in post. The trust appointed a director of academy improvement in January 2019, and she has been working closely with the school.

## **Main findings**

Through your work with the trust and external support, much needed systems and processes have now been put in place. High-quality support, for example from a national leader of education (NLE) and Beckmead Family of Schools, is resulting in necessary changes being made to move the school forward. Despite being recently introduced, these changes are having a positive impact on the quality of provision.

You and trust leaders correctly judge that the rate at which changes have been introduced since the previous inspection has been too slow. Consequently, little meaningful progress towards addressing the areas for improvement was made over the summer term of 2018.

When you took up post in September 2018, you worked with the trust and local authority to evaluate all aspects of the school's work. You, senior leaders and trust representatives are honest and accurate in your evaluation of the school and of what still needs to be done. The school's plan for improvement identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and actions to achieve them. However, it lacks milestones and quantifiable measures to assist those monitoring the plan to check if you are on track to achieve your priorities. A rapid improvement plan, introduced at the start of the summer term, is more effective in identifying and bringing about change in a short timescale. The trust is using it to monitor change, and holds you and other leaders more closely to account.

More frequent monitoring and closer oversight from the trust have ensured that it has an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. The appointment of experienced staff to the positions of CEO and academy improvement lead have led to greater accountability for school leaders and a more accurate view of the school. As a result, the trust is making sure that leaders receive appropriate support and resources, balanced with the challenge that is needed to improve provision.

You and other leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching through lesson observations and learning walks. Your evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been validated by trust staff and the local authority school effectiveness partner. You have accurately identified that the quality of teaching across the school is still too variable. Feedback following observations from senior leaders is being used to address whole-school priorities and individual teachers' development needs. Although 'pupil passports' mean that more information is readily available about pupils' individual needs, these are not yet being used well by all teachers. This was evident from our visits to lessons, where some teachers had used the information to plan and adapt learning for individuals and others had not.

The associate headteacher has provided effective leadership of changes to the teaching, learning and the assessment of writing. Teachers have a much more accurate view of what pupils are achieving and the next steps in their learning. Your chosen approaches are supporting many pupils to make better progress in their writing, although this is often from very low starting points.

Through your work with external partners, including the NLE, senior leaders identified that assessment systems in the school were not fit for purpose. Credible plans are in place to implement a new system from September. Similarly, you have reviewed the curriculum. You identified that it did not meet the needs or aspirations of many pupils, leading to them becoming disengaged, bored and misbehaving. Teachers responded with punitive measures, leading to a high number of exclusions. Changes that you have already made have improved pupils' learning and engagement. Outdoor learning for Year 6 pupils is resulting in good progress in their social and personal development. They show positive relationships with one

another and with the adults who lead the sessions. Horticulture provides pupils with opportunities to learn and apply skills in mathematics and technology, for example, in a practical, real-world context. These opportunities capture pupils' interest and make learning relevant to them.

You and trust leaders recognise that provision for a small group of pupils has not been effective in meeting their needs or successfully re-engaging them with education. You and the associate headteacher have worked with the local authority and alternative providers to put more suitable programmes in place for these pupils. This has had some success. Some pupils who were at risk of not moving on to further education, employment or training have secured places at college. However, there is still more work to do to develop a range of effective programmes to better meet the needs of these pupils.

Leaders and governors acted promptly to the findings of a review of pupil premium funding carried out in July 2018. There is now a clear rationale behind the activities that are in place. Individual tuition is having a greater impact in helping pupils to make progress in mathematics than in literacy. This is because, as leaders have rightly identified, the links between literacy interventions and pupils' writing targets are not clear enough. Furthermore, additional sessions are not filling pupils' gaps in phonics knowledge, so their progress in reading is too patchy.

The trust commissioned a review of governance from the local authority in May 2018. Trustees quickly made decisions to change the local governance structure of the school. When it became clear that this amended structure was not resulting in effective challenge to school leaders, the trust passed responsibilities to an executive committee, consisting of trust board members and school leaders. The chair of the trust has experience of school governance over a number of years and the CEO of the trust has previously been a strategic lead for special educational needs and/or disabilities in the local authority. There is evidence of an increase in challenge because of their knowledge and expertise. However, the trust has commissioned an additional external review of governance to further improve effectiveness.

Safeguarding is effective. You ensure that all of the required checks are carried out to make sure that adults are suitable to work in the school. The record of these checks is accurately maintained and regularly checked by you and trust staff. Staff receive regular training and updates so that they can recognise the signs that a pupil is at risk of harm. They are confident in how to raise concerns. These are followed up promptly and referred to external agencies in a timely manner, when necessary, so that pupils and their families get the help they need. You recognise that absence can be a sign that a pupil is at risk and that it also places them at greater risk of harm. Systems to monitor absence have been tightened, particularly for those pupils receiving outreach support. Levels of supervision at breaktime and lunchtime are appropriate and the site is a safe environment. Pupils say that they have adults that they trust and can report concerns to. Pupils learn to stay safe

through personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies.

### **External support**

Leaders are benefiting from, and engaging with, a range of good-quality support, some of which has been established recently. In addition to conducting reviews of governance and the use pupil premium, a local authority school effectiveness partner has provided external views of the school to inform your evaluation and improvement plans.

Educational psychologists, including one seconded to the school, have provided training for staff to support them to recognise how they can better meet pupils' needs. The educational psychologists have also assisted with pupils' annual reviews. The executive headteacher of Beckmead School, an outstanding school that caters for pupils with broadly similar needs and capabilities, has provided opportunities for your staff to observe highly effective practice. His staff have also shared effective strategies regarding behaviour management, developing consistently positive relationships between staff and pupils, and practical advice on how to improve the learning environment and curriculum. An NLE has been working with the school since Easter. She has provided strong, sound practical advice on how you can improve provision more rapidly, which you are acting on. This effective support is set to continue and be extended through bids for additional funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**