

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T T 0300 123 1231

www.gov.uk/ofsted



11 October 2019

Robert Sloan
Executive Principal
Lodge Park Academy
Shetland Way
Corby
NN17 2JH

Dear Mr Sloan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lodge Park Academy

Following my visit with Claire Shepherd, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 1–2 October 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 January 2019.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

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 Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2019

- Urgently improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by ensuring that:
 - all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy so that pupils behave well, and time is not wasted in lessons
 - all staff have high expectations about pupils showing respect to others in the school community
 - the provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development enables pupils to develop a fuller understanding of and respect for people of different faiths and cultures.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - trustees support the new leadership of the school to make the necessary and urgent improvements to the school, and hold leaders to account to ensure that these improvements are made
 - trustees support leaders to secure permanent, high-quality teaching staff across the school
 - assessment information is accurate, so that leaders and governors are better informed about pupils' progress
 - additional funds are spent effectively to improve the progress of pupils with SEND, pupils who start the school with low attainment in reading and mathematics, and disadvantaged pupils
 - the training for subject leaders enables them to improve the quality of teaching in their areas
 - the training for all staff ensures that their needs are identified and met and enables them to improve their practice
 - there are more opportunities to share good teaching practice across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for all pupils, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and boys, by ensuring that:
 - the proportion of lessons covered by temporary staff reduces rapidly, so that pupils' behaviour in class improves and they are better able to focus on their learning
 - teachers use accurate information about what pupils can do to plan learning that meets pupils' needs and enables them to make good progress and behave well

- teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide them with work that is appropriately challenging
- pupils complete work to the best possible standard
- teachers plan learning that interests and motivates pupils to learn.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 1–2 October 2019

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents. They considered the trust's statement of action, the school's action plan and other plans for improvement.

Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, a group of teachers and a group of support staff. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Inspectors held meetings with trustees of the David Ross Education Trust (DRET), including the chair of the board of trustees, and members of the academy scrutiny committee (ASC), as well as the chief executive officer (CEO) and the deputy CEO.

Inspectors observed learning with senior leaders and checked on pupils' work. An inspector visited the behaviour inclusion centre. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and other pupils individually. They also spoke with pupils around the school and observed pupils at social times.

Context

There have been some notable changes to the school's leadership since the previous inspection. A new principal started at the school in August 2019. The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENDCo) is now a member of the senior team. An assistant principal is now responsible for overseeing the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding. A new curriculum leader has been appointed in mathematics, as well as another responsible for science and technology.

Just before the last inspection, the trust reviewed the school's governance structure. The ASC was established in December 2018. Since the last inspection, this committee now includes parent representatives.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

In September 2018, nearly one third of the teaching staff were temporary. Almost all the teachers are now permanent members of staff. Many pupils told inspectors that knowing that their teachers are not going to keep changing helps them to behave and learn better. As one pupil commented, 'Now we have got a permanent teacher it is all coming together.'

Leaders have acted quickly to improve pupils' behaviour. They have introduced 'The Lodge Park Way' which sets out clear behaviour expectations. Staff understand their role in managing any poor behaviour. Most staff have high expectations of pupils'

conduct. They apply the new behaviour systems consistently and feel well supported by leaders.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. There is less disruption in lessons. This helps all pupils, particularly those with SEND, to learn better. Pupils know and understand what will happen if they do something wrong. Most pupils are courteous to each other and relationships with adults are positive. There is a pleasant atmosphere during social times.

A minority of pupils have not improved their behaviour. Leaders place these pupils in the 'behaviour inclusion centre'. However, leaders do not always help these pupils to modify their behaviour before they return to class. They do not check that the work pupils complete in the centre is appropriate. Too many of these pupils continue to be disruptive. This leads to fixed-term exclusions, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The number of pupils who are excluded permanently remains noticeably high.

Pupils' attendance is slightly below the national average. Leaders' actions are not yet helping pupils who are absent regularly to attend more often. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

A small number of pupils receive some or all of their education through off-site alternative providers. Not all of these pupils receive their full-time education entitlement.

Leaders are beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of education. They have changed to a three-year key stage 3. Subject leaders have thought about the knowledge needed by pupils in Years 7 and 8. In each subject, they have reviewed the order in which they teach topics and included more subject-specific language. However, subject leaders have only implemented these new curriculum plans recently.

Leaders have shared their view of successful learning with all staff. Inspectors observed teachers checking on pupils' learning. They use these checks to identify any pupils who do not understand and to clarify any misconceptions pupils might have. However, teachers' questions do not always help pupils to develop their understanding and secure their learning. As yet, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Previously, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been too low. This has begun to change. Some teachers use strong subject knowledge to plan learning that engages pupils. However, some work still lacks challenge and ambition. Similarly, not all teachers think about how they can fill the gaps in older pupils' knowledge, left previously by poor-quality teaching.

Pupils usually present their work well. However, they sometimes repeat grammar and spelling errors. Currently, there is no whole-school approach to literacy. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but many are not confident in their abilities. Leaders have not prioritised improving the provision for pupils' personal development. Changes to staff have led to an inconsistent delivery of the curriculum in this area. Pupils are not taught the information they need. For instance, they cannot talk about different faiths and cultures with any confidence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school

The trust has strengthened the leadership of the school, particularly with the appointment of the new principal. While it is still early days, the executive principal and the principal make an effective team and provide strong leadership. Changes they have already made to the school's culture have made a positive difference.

The school has stable leadership for the first time in many years. Trustees ensured that the majority of teachers were permanent appointments by the start of the current academic year. This means that all staff now communicate a clear and uncompromising message to pupils, parents and carers.

There is a clear structure of governance in place. School leaders keep members of the ASC and the trustees well informed about their work. Members of the ASC are becoming more skilled at holding leaders to account for their actions. The deputy CEO checks on all aspects of the school's performance closely. Trustees know that leaders still have a lot to do to improve the quality of education.

Leaders' plans for improvement are credible. They focus closely on those areas that inspectors identified at the previous inspection. Leaders check the impact of their work precisely. They know what is working before they move on.

Leaders have taken action in response to external reviews of the pupil premium funding and the provision for pupils with SEND. A senior leader has taken over responsibility for the use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and the Year 7 catch-up funding. The SENDCo is now part of the senior team. Some early actions by these leaders to support these groups of pupils have already had a positive impact. However, there is still much more work to do. For instance, leaders do not ensure that Year 7 catch-up funding is being used well enough to support those pupils who start school behind in mathematics.

Leaders accurately identify when pupils do not achieve as well as they should. They have introduced new systems to help teachers identify those pupils who need more support. However, teachers are not yet skilled at meeting the needs of some pupils. The current curriculum is not ambitious enough for pupils with SEND and for disadvantaged pupils.

Senior leaders and trustees make sure that subject leaders benefit from relevant training. DRET has increased the level of support it provides to help subject leaders plan the new curriculums. However, some subject leaders have not received as much guidance as others.

Teachers are also receiving more training than previously. Leaders have included opportunities for teachers to develop their skills. Teachers are positive about sharing their practice with others, in school and beyond. As pupils' behaviour has improved, teachers appreciate being able to focus on implementing the curriculum well.

Staff are very positive about leaders' efforts to consider their workload, for example with the recent review of the school's assessment policy.

Leaders have appropriate checks in place to make sure that staff are safe to work with pupils. Staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training. They know how to spot if a pupil is at risk. They understand the importance of telling leaders about their concerns promptly. Leaders take appropriate actions to keep pupils safe. They have responded swiftly to a recent review of safeguarding by the trust so that their systems and processes are secure. Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to reduce any risks they may face.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders have secured significant improvements in pupils' behaviour. Fewer lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. There is a growing culture of courtesy and respect.
- Subject leaders' curriculum plans in Year 7 and Year 8 are now focused on ensuring that pupils know and remember more.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- A minority of pupils continue to be disruptive and excluded from school, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These pupils are not supported well enough to improve their behaviour or their learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve are too low. Some teachers' planning does not focus on plugging the gaps in older pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not consider the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND well enough.
- Leaders have not improved pupils' personal development. Pupils still do not have an understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- A small number of pupils do not receive their full-time education entitlement.