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Mr Graham Payne
Principal
Chart Wood School
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Dear Mr Payne

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chart Wood School

Following my visit to your school on 2 to 3 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 April 2019.

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.

The trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently review and sharpen safeguarding processes so that:
 - pupils' individual safety and support plans include specific, helpful information so that staff are able to keep pupils safe
 - all staff are consistently using and applying the school's safeguarding procedures and systems appropriately
 - all actions following a concern are systematically recorded and appropriately followed up.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management and governance, by ensuring that:
 - a sustainable and effective leadership, governance and staffing structure is in place
 - leaders use the newly introduced systems to monitor the progress of pupils effectively, including that for disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, so that it is clear which aspects of teaching and additional support are working and which are not
 - pupils access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, well suited to their needs
 - a range of school performance information is gathered, analysed regularly and used to inform school improvement planning
 - school policies provide staff with sufficiently detailed information to ensure that the school's procedures are consistently applied
 - leaders reliably analyse information about pupils' behaviour and attendance to inform their actions to bring about improvement
 - additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve the progress and outcomes of this group
 - staff receive appropriate training and support to have the necessary skills and resources to manage pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs effectively
 - PE and sport funding is used to increase competitive opportunities for pupils and increase rates of participation.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, make consistently good progress in all aspects of learning, by ensuring that:
 - all staff have consistently high expectations for all pupils' behaviour and

achievement, including for the most able pupils

- teachers have reliable subject knowledge in the subjects that they teach
 - teachers make effective use of information from their assessment of pupils' progress to provide suitably challenging teaching that builds on pupils' prior learning and matches their needs.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by ensuring that:
- pupils attend school regularly
 - the school's behaviour management procedures are understood by all staff and followed consistently
 - all behaviour, bullying and racist incidents are recorded and dealt with effectively
 - staff are well equipped to meet pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health needs
 - fixed-term exclusions are reduced
 - transition times between activities and lessons are managed so that learning time is maximised.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 2 to 3 October 2019

Evidence

Together with senior leaders, I made short visits to most classrooms to look at pupils' learning. I held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders and non-teaching staff. I also met with the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer from Orchard Hill College Academy Trust. A telephone discussion was held with the chair of the local governing body.

I reviewed a range of documents including safeguarding records, policies, improvement plans and the school's curriculum. I also scrutinised records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. I reviewed records of meetings of the local governing body.

Context

Some changes have been made to the leadership of the school. The deputy headteacher, who was interim headteacher during the last full inspection, has now reverted to her deputy headteacher post. A new principal joined the school in September 2019.

Some staff have left since the last inspection, including: six non-teaching staff; two unqualified teachers; and the school's designated safeguarding lead. The school's senior behaviour lead is planning to leave before half term. In recent times, an art teacher, office manager and teaching assistant have joined the school. The home-school liaison worker has returned after a period of absence. Several staff remain absent. Many classes are taught by temporary and unqualified staff.

Since joining, the principal has also taken on the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL). A new permanent member of staff who will act as DSL will join the school before half term.

There have been changes to the leadership of the trust. The chief executive officer (CEO) retired in July 2019. A new CEO took up the role in September 2019.

The school will transfer to a different site at the end of this academic year. It is planned that the school will operate out of newly refurbished premises from September 2020.

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

Too little has been achieved to improve the quality of education on offer. Staff, including those who are temporary, are struggling to meet pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils do not have individual learning plans in

place. Consequently, adults are often unclear how to adapt their teaching so that pupils' special educational needs are catered for. Where individual plans are available, these are not followed closely enough by adults. Furthermore, in some pupils' plans, appropriate adaptations such as the use of visual timetables, are identified but not implemented. This means that pupils struggle to access and engage in the education on offer. Pupils' day-to-day learning experiences are not improving rapidly enough.

Temporary teaching arrangements dominate in many classes. Many staff are unqualified and do not have sufficient expertise to meet the complex needs of the pupils in the school. Activities are often poorly planned and do not account for pupils' special educational needs. Staff have not yet received training to help them improve.

Leaders have not ensured that staff know what is expected. For example, the school's behaviour policy does not refer to the rewards and sanctions systems in place. There is a high level of inconsistency. Some staff do not address pupils' use of derogatory language. The school's reward and sanction systems are not implemented reliably. As a result, pupils lack the motivation needed to give of their best. Key policies, including the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour, have not been reviewed since the last inspection. There is no joined-up approach to getting the best from pupils.

Learning time is frequently disrupted. Staff struggle to de-escalate situations in order to manage pupils' behaviour. Transition times do not run smoothly, and staff are sometimes poorly equipped to deal with pupils' outbursts. This causes significant disruption to others. Many staff do not have the skills required.

Staff have reviewed some pupils' individual safety and support plans. However, this is not the case for all pupils. Pupils' plans do not always reflect their educational needs strongly enough. This means that staff do not have all the information they need to keep pupils safe. In addition, recently introduced class records, called context sheets, show that adults know pupils well. These are helpful in setting out pupils' barriers to learning. However, strategies to support pupils are underdeveloped and do not draw sufficiently strongly on pupils' individual learning plans or expert advice.

Pupils' level of attendance has not improved. Absence and persistent absence remain high. Too little was achieved after the inspection as key members of staff with responsibility for this aspect were absent. However, since the home-school worker re-joined the school in September 2019, leaders' oversight has resumed. Pupils who do not attend regularly are now monitored far more closely. However, this work is at a very early stage and it is too soon to see an overall improvement to pupils' attendance.

Safeguarding processes remain ineffective. Although the trust has utilised some

support for staff, checks such as those related to safer recruitment are still not as thorough as they need to be. The trust undertakes checks on adults' suitability to work with children. However, this information is not passed on to the school in a timely manner. This means that those responsible for maintaining the school's single central record do not have the information that they need. Moreover, there is still some misunderstanding about the different types of checks and who they apply to.

The school remains dependent on employing agency staff. However, the quality of some agency checks is poor. Leaders have been too accepting of the information they receive and not challenged this aspect strongly enough. This means they are not fully assured that adults are safe to be with children. Nevertheless, the relatively new office manager keeps records systematically and is developing her expertise. Trustee employees, who support this aspect of safeguarding, have not spotted errors in the school's processes for themselves.

The school's DSL left at the end of the summer term. The principal is now acting as a 'figurehead' DSL but not satisfying the full requirements of the role, as set out in the school's policy. Instead, the school's deputy DSL undertakes many of the duties required. A further change is planned later this term when a new member of staff joins the team. These frequent changes are hindering leaders' oversight of pupils' safety. Record-keeping relating to keeping pupils safe remains highly variable.

Leaders have made some notable progress in improving safeguarding processes. The school's policy has been reviewed and meets the requirements of the latest government guidance. This is a useful point of reference for staff. Staff have received training and are aware of the risks that pupils may face. Some staff have also trained to a higher level. There is now greater expertise on hand in this regard.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Immediately after the previous inspection too little was achieved. Actions to improve the school were not set in motion promptly enough. During this time, the school remained reliant on interim leadership arrangements. Senior leaders did not set a clear steer for improvement.

Trustees are well intended. During the summer term, they supported leaders as best they could practically. By their own admission, they took on some operational responsibility including writing the school's action plan. However, the plan did not allocate who was responsible for each improvement action. Other weaknesses included unrealistic timescales and a lack of clarity about who was to lead on each action. Many intended improvements have not yet started. For instance, staff have not yet received training on how to manage pupils' behaviour. Trustees know that they are subsidising expertise as leaders are not yet demonstrating capacity to improve.

Following the last inspection, a review of governance and pupil premium was

completed. The governing body have only met twice since the last inspection. Governors' contribution to instigating rapid improvement is yet to take hold. They are still finding out about the school and considering how to make their work effective. This means that governors are yet to begin the task of supporting leaders to improve the school.

Since the principal's arrival, there is a greater sense of expectation. He has used his few weeks sensibly by providing direction and a much-needed stabilising influence. There is now a shared view of the extent of improvement required. However, trustees and leaders are yet to forge a plan of action. The route forward is not formalised, and so staff are unclear of what is to be achieved by when and by whom.

While this appointment is a step in the right direction, it is too early to show sufficient demonstrable improvement.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- All are committed to improving the school. The appointment of the experienced principal is providing much-needed leadership.
- Staff want to develop their skills. They are committed to improving their expertise and supporting school leaders.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Responsible stakeholders, including trustees and governors, have not established an improvement plan for this academic year. This means that staff are not clear on the way forward or what is expected by when.
- Senior leaders who hold specific responsibilities such as for pupils' behaviour or the curriculum do not have sufficient skills or expertise. Training is required to ensure that they have the knowledge and expertise to drive improvement and to quality assure provision across the school.
- Issues relating to high rates of staff absence and temporary unqualified staff are unresolved. Some new staff are still getting to know their roles.
- Staff do not have the skills necessary to manage pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs effectively. A lack of clarity about the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour further hampers their effectiveness. Leaders need to clarify the school's approach to strengthen this aspect.

External support

Partnership work is at a very early stage. Up until this point, the trust has used its own internal staff to support school leaders. In very recent times, a stronger and renewed partnership is beginning to develop with the local authority education welfare service. Staff with responsibility for attendance are making greater use of this service to support families. However, it is too soon to evaluate whether this is making a difference to improving pupils' attendance.