

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Christine Fraser
The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning
Churchill Road
Bentley
Walsall
West Midlands
WS2 0JH

Dear Mrs Fraser,

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

Following my visit with Alun Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 5 to 6 November 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 November 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 one newly qualified teacher in English and one newly qualified teacher in mathematics 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, 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 second monitoring inspection on 5 November 2019 to 6 November 2019

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting interim headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, parents and members of the interim executive board (IEB). An inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority and the school's independent adviser.

Inspectors visited lessons accompanied by senior leaders. They evaluated the work in pupils' books. An inspector listened to pupils read and spoke to them about their work. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and observed behaviour in lessons and during social times.

Inspectors focused on the areas for improvement identified from the first monitoring inspection that had not been successfully addressed.

Context

The school continues to be led by an acting interim headteacher from a local school, an acting assistant headteacher, an acting designated safeguarding lead and an acting behaviour mentor. Since the previous inspection the acting interim deputy headteacher has taken maternity leave.

A new chair has been appointed to the IEB and a new member has joined the board.

The school continues to have a number of staff on long-term absence. Long-term supply staff are filling these positions.

As from September 2019, there are no sixth-form students on roll at the school.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. The balanced curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. In 2018, all pupils achieved a qualification in English and most pupils in mathematics. All Year 11 pupils went on to appropriate post-16 settings and most in Year 13 went on to further education. However, the planning of the school's curriculum is inconsistent. Where planning is effective, as in English, the work in pupils' books shows how they are building their skills and knowledge well so that they know more and can remember more. For example, pupils' work showed that by the end of a topic on non-fiction writing, pupils could explain the use of persuasive language used in different advertisements. However, this effective practice is not consistent across all subjects.

Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 continue to receive impartial careers guidance from an external careers adviser. The adviser meets with pupils to discuss the next steps in their education and attends their education, health and care (EHC) plan reviews. Leaders have begun to improve pupils' wider careers provision through the curriculum and additional activities. For example, people from different professions and jobs are invited in to talk to pupils in assembly. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 practise writing their curriculum vitae in personal, social, health and economic lessons. Pupils in Year 10 go on work experience. However, while leaders have plans to extend the wider careers provision, there is still a lot to do to ensure that the school meets the government's expectations for careers guidance.

The quality of teaching and learning shows signs of improvement.

Staff are beginning to use the information in pupils' EHC plans effectively to inform their teaching. For example, in mathematics activities are planned that help pupils to develop effective communication, self-confidence and life skills. In one lesson, pupils were asked to judge whether things they buy were good value for money. The individual support given to pupils with complex needs in the 'bases' shows that staff have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. During visits to lessons, all pupils were engaged in their learning. In a numeracy lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of the difference between heavy and light objects and could apply this knowledge well in practical work.

Leaders have rightly prioritised improving the teaching of reading. Phonics is taught and primary children have story time. However, not all staff have been trained to deliver phonics and therefore the quality of delivery is inconsistent. Leaders have prioritised this as an area for whole-school training.

There is a clear focus in secondary English lessons on developing reading. The library provision in the secondary phase continues to be improved by the purchase of age appropriate books. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to read and have a reading log for parents to fill in. Reading is a focus of celebration in assemblies. Pupils who read aloud to an inspector did so with confidence and said that they were enjoying the books they were reading. However, there is no formal system for tracking the progress that pupils are making in reading or any interventions to help those pupils who are falling behind. This is hindering pupils' progress.

There is an assessment system in place that tracks pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The deputy headteacher analyses the information and uses it to identify pupils who have fallen behind. Pupil-progress meetings are held with staff and interventions are put into place for these pupils. Early indicators show that most pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. However, the assessment system needs refining to ensure that the information is reliable and valid.

While there are signs of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, the rate of improvement is being hindered by the instability in staffing. Leaders need to appoint permanent staff in key positions. For example, the quality of pupils' work in the primary phase is inconsistent because of the high number of different staff leading their lessons.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders are embedding a culture of safeguarding. Training for staff considers the vulnerability of the pupils at the school. Links with external agencies are effective. For example, the school hosts clinics led by the child and adolescent mental health services and paediatricians. This enables leaders to give pupils and their families additional support when they need it.

Medical plans and intimate care plans for pupils who need them are in place. Additional training has been given to staff when needed. For example, training has recently been delivered to staff on the management of diabetes.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils say that they feel safe and they have someone they trust to talk to.

Attendance remains low but continues to improve. Systems for the monitoring and tracking of attendance have been refined. Attendance is given a high profile in the school. For example, attendance is rewarded in assemblies and pupils with 100% attendance for the week are named in the school's newsletter. As a result, over the last term the number of pupils with attendance below 80% has reduced by 7%.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are using this to inform effective action towards the removal of special measures. The school's action plan details a range of strategies that are addressing the areas for improvement from the last monitoring inspection. It is clear who will do what, and when. However, some actions would benefit from measurable success criteria. This would help with leaders' self-evaluation and enable governors to hold leaders more closely to account for their actions.

The IEB continues to offer leaders effective support in securing school improvement. Governors work collaboratively with leaders. They have each taken the lead for an area of responsibility. Examples of the impact of this work include the improvement in the learning environment, the refining of induction safeguarding procedures and the increase in funding attached to several pupils' EHC plans.

A comprehensive training plan for staff is in place. The plan has been informed by the outcomes of teachers' appraisal meetings and the use of the teaching and learning standards for teaching assistants. It has an appropriate mix of bespoke and whole school training. However, the impact of this training on improving the quality

of teaching and learning is yet to be realised.

Parents and carers are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school. Representatives from the parents' forum regularly meet with the deputy headteacher to discuss concerns. There is a parent teacher association and a recently formed 'Friends of Jane Lane' group. As a result, some parents speak positively about the support provided by the school. However, others raise concerns including issues with transport and at times, poor communication from the school.

An external review of pupil premium funding was undertaken in May 2019. The visit resulted in a number of recommendations for the school to address. Leaders are beginning to take effective action. For example, there is now a pupil premium funding plan in place for this academic year. The plan identifies barriers to learning, intended outcomes and measurable success criteria. A further review to check the progress of leaders' actions has been planned for next term.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The senior leadership team and members of the IEB share a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality provision for the pupils. They work together to get things done. They continue to review their actions. This ensures continual improvement.

External support

The school continues to benefit from effective support from the local authority's attendance and safeguarding officers. However, to ensure that the school continues to take effective action towards the removal of special measures, further action needs to be taken to secure a substantive leadership team for the school and stability in staffing.