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Mr Dean Watkin
Newsome High School
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Dear Mr Watkin

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Newsome High School

Following my visit to your school on 14 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2018.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - providing the support and development which teachers need, so that teaching is consistently good or better
 - ensuring that teachers consider pupils' abilities, knowledge and skills and use this information to plan work which meets pupils' needs
 - embedding strategies to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that they make better progress and catch up with pupils who have similar starting points
 - developing pupils' literacy skills by ensuring that there are more opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length
 - ensuring that teachers consistently apply the school's assessment policy.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - further improving the attendance of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - further reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school
 - embedding further the principles of respect, integrity, teamwork and aspiration in the school's everyday work, so that it becomes a consistent feature of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning
 - eliminating the low-level disruption in lessons.
- Further improve leadership and management, by:
 - developing systems and procedures which will allow leaders to quickly access the information they need to establish an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance to inform their next actions
 - developing leadership at all levels to take full advantage of the skills, motivation and passion for change which exists within school leaders and governors
 - ensuring that teachers are held to account for their performance.

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 14 November 2019

Evidence

The inspector met the headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and leaders for SEND. He held meetings with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and representatives of the multi-academy trust providing support to the school. He also met the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust that the school is due to join.

The inspector scrutinised school plans, records of monitoring and evaluation, behaviour and attendance records and external reviews of the school. Subject leaders shared samples of pupils' work with the inspector.

Context

Leaders of English and science have been appointed since the last inspection. Most science and history teachers are new. Leaders have restructured the support staff. Many teaching assistants are new. The school will join the Impact Education Multi Academy Trust in 2020.

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

Leaders are taking effective steps to improve the quality of education pupils receive. Approaches to teaching give more structure and support for pupils' learning. Pupils are engaging better in learning.

In mathematics, the new scheme of learning gives more help for pupils to solve and explain problems. Pupils discuss and answer questions orally more often. Teachers assess pupils' understanding of topics more regularly. Other tests assess understanding of key concepts. Staff are beginning to check what pupils remember from the last six topics. Improvements are leading to higher achievement but teaching does not give enough challenge for the most able.

Weaknesses in teaching and staffing in science affected pupils' learning in the past. Improved leadership and new appointments have stabilised the department. Staff provide a better range of science expertise. Teachers' assessments are also identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers are adjusting the curriculum to overcome these gaps.

The new leader of English brings strong subject expertise. She has a clear vision and priorities. Pupils are expected to read more whole books and more challenging texts. Plans are in place to broaden pupils' reading and increase their enjoyment of literature. In history, pupils are writing at greater length and in more detail.

Coordination between the specialist resource provisions for the hearing and physically impaired and mainstream support has improved. This contributes to better planned support for pupils with SEND. New teaching assistants have added to the school's expertise in SEND. Staff have quick access to information about pupils' special educational needs and the actions they should take.

There is extra support to develop pupils' literacy skills. Staff check its impact more frequently. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including new arrivals from abroad, are receiving more support.

Pupils' behaviour has improved because of higher expectations. Teachers use sanctions more consistently. There is much less low-level disruption in lessons. An added step to the sanctions procedure has prevented pupils crossing the line that leads to exclusion. As a result, fixed-term exclusions of pupils from school have reduced significantly. Bullying is infrequent. Staff use pupil surveys about bullying to act quickly on any concerns.

Permanent exclusions have been high. Most of these pupils arrived in key stage 4 because other providers had already excluded them. The reasons for exclusion include acts of violence and drug use. These exclusions have helped to raise expectations of behaviour.

Pupils' attendance has risen. Persistent absence has reduced significantly. Staff are doing more home visits. Families receive better and earlier support from the school and other agencies. The school is taking formal action against parents and carers who do not send pupils to school. There are more rewards for good attendance. Targeted work with disadvantaged pupils is improving their attendance and achievement.

A more flexible curriculum has helped disengaged pupils to increase their attendance and enjoyment of school. A new centre gives social support and guidance to pupils who may feel vulnerable. Pupils have more opportunities for wider development. Pupils go on more educational trips. Staff target those least likely to have such opportunities at home.

The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school

The headteacher and senior leaders are very visible around school. They promote good relationships and constantly reinforce school standards. The principles of respect, integrity, teamwork and aspiration are becoming embedded in everyday work and language. Staff communicate school values methodically. Leaders are promoting better behaviour and improving attitudes to learning.

Professional development has improved teaching and the management of pupils' behaviour. Professional support and well-defined targets are enabling individual teachers to make necessary improvements. In a few cases, staff have left. Leaders'

self-evaluation of each subject, and of the school's overall effectiveness, is more rigorous.

Few pupils who took GCSE examinations in 2019 studied a modern language or a humanities subject. By contrast, 60% of the current Year 11 are taking subjects in both these areas. The school is taking effective steps towards the government ambition for most pupils to take these subjects as well as English, mathematics and science.

Leaders have better communication with primary schools and the wider community. This has contributed to an increase in the number of pupils.

Leaders and the governing body have changed the staff structure. They have improved the management of finance and resources and overcome a deficit. The school now has a balanced budget.

The expertise of governors contributes to their strategic role and school responsibilities. Governors evaluate leaders' actions and their regular school visits give them a first-hand view of impact. They have scrutinised the actions to improve the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The headteacher's vision and actions are driving improvement strongly. Plans are well conceived. Staff, governors and external partners hold the headteacher in high regard.
- Senior and subject leaders have made very effective use of the training, development and advice from the partner trust.
- The pupils' improved behaviour and culture for learning provides the conditions for improved teaching and learning.
- Accurate evaluation of how well particular groups of pupils are doing has led to precise action to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Subject leaders are making improvements to the curriculum and teaching.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Some subject leaders have been appointed recently. They have had limited time to have an impact on teaching, learning and achievement. Middle leadership needs further development.
- Outcomes in English are weak. Improvements to the curriculum are in the early stages of implementation.
- The curriculum is not enabling the most able to achieve well enough.
- Leaders are at early stage of reviewing the curriculum. Leaders plan to

strengthen pupils' understanding of key concepts. They want pupils to build their knowledge in sequence and remember what they have learned.

External support

External support has made a strong contribution to the school's improvement. The local authority commissioned a multi-academy trust to provide support. The local authority has checked the impact of this work accurately.

Staff have used the trust's advice and professional development to implement improvements to teaching, learning and the curriculum. A national leader of education has worked with the headteacher to adjust support to match the needs of the school. Specialist leaders of education have improved subject leadership and teaching. They are helping leaders to review the curriculum. External reviews have helped senior leaders to identify next steps.

A different multi-academy trust will be the school sponsor. Its chief executive officer is liaising with school leaders, the governing body and the current partner trust to ensure a smooth transition.