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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Janice Mitchell
The Boulevard Academy
Massey Close
Kingston upon Hull
HU3 3QT

Dear Mrs Mitchell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Boulevard Academy

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 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 has received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

Senior leaders and trustees 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.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the quality of education by ensuring that pupils consistently use the guidance they receive from assessments to improve their knowledge, learning and progress
- improve the behaviour of pupils so their attitudes to learning are consistently good and low-level disruption is further reduced
- improve the attendance of all pupils, including those who are persistently absent.

Evidence

During the inspection I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal and other senior leaders and staff. I met with members of the board of trustees. I also talked with pupils during lessons and within a group.

I visited a range of lessons and activities with senior leaders.

During this first monitoring visit, I focused on the areas for improvement linked to the quality of education, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and leadership and management.

Context

Since the previous inspection there has been a change in the leadership of mathematics. In addition, the new principal who took up post in September 2018 has restructured the senior leadership and management team and redefined several roles and responsibilities. A major review of the curriculum has also taken place, resulting in the implementation of a new curriculum model in September 2019.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection in November 2018, the new principal, with the support of trustees, embarked upon a programme of significant review and change. The actions taken have been effective in making the improvements required. Several areas of leadership have been strengthened through a combination of appointments to key posts and a review of roles and responsibilities.

The curriculum policy has been completely overhauled. The school has moved to a two-year key stage 3 curriculum for an interim period. Leaders make a compelling argument for this action in that those pupils who have been in the school since the time of the previous inspection have been disadvantaged. Leaders expect the current 'recovery curriculum' model will be reviewed further over the coming year.

Staff, leaders and pupils are positive about the changes which have been made. Leaders and teachers across the school have been involved in the quality assurance and improvement strategies which have been adopted by the school.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have identified that the curriculum offered to pupils was not meeting their needs. Pupils in key stage 3 were not receiving the quality of education they required for further learning into key stage 4. Consequently, leaders have implemented a three-year key stage 4 'recovery curriculum'. This is designed to allow pupils the opportunity to develop both the knowledge and skills which they should have encountered, but have not been exposed to previously. Leaders are aware that a two-year key stage 3 curriculum model requires careful consideration in order to avoid any curriculum narrowing, and, as such, are committed to an ongoing review of its effect.

Leaders and teachers have worked hard to develop a consistent approach to planning the curriculum. Plans for learning in many subject areas are ordered and sequenced so that they build upon pupils' prior knowledge. However, leaders acknowledge there is more work to do in some subject areas. The implementation

of these new curriculum plans is also a work in progress. During lesson visits, I saw evidence in pupils' work of a consistent approach to learning according to curriculum plans. Teachers are challenging pupils to extend their learning through self- and teacher-assessment methods. These assessments are identifying gaps in pupils' learning too. However, there is less consistency in the response from pupils, when they are set additional challenges to improve their work through teacher assessments. In some pupils' books, there are examples of missing or incomplete work. Those pupils who are disadvantaged and those pupils with special educational needs and/disabilities (SEND) are, however, supported effectively in their learning. The work of these pupils does not differ in content or quality from the work of other pupils. In lessons, I saw strong examples of teachers and additional adults supporting the learning of a wide range of pupils.

Leaders have also reviewed the behaviour policy of the school. The school no longer isolates pupils who do not meet behaviour expectations. Leaders make no apology for raising expectations in the classroom either. They have challenged those pupils who have less than positive attitudes towards their learning. As a result, fixed-term exclusions of pupils from school have increased. However, pupils upon their return to school are assigned a programme of restorative support designed to reduce the risk of further repeat exclusions. Permanent exclusions have dramatically reduced in number since the previous inspection. Pupils told me during my visit that the school had changed for the better since the arrival of the new principal. They also told me that behaviour has improved, although they recognise that it can improve further.

Leaders have worked hard to challenge those pupils who do not attend school often enough. They have been uncompromising in their expectations and actions. A new attendance team, with support from pastoral staff and heads of year, are relentless in their approach to encourage improved attendance and reduce persistent absence. The school makes use of local authority support, including an educational welfare officer. Leaders have taken the decision to close registers relatively early for morning registration, making clear to pupils the importance of punctuality and how lateness can have a negative effect on their learning.

Leaders and trustees have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development. The principal has ensured that trustees have the information they need to hold leaders to account effectively. Trustees use this information as a basis for focused and transparent discussion about the effect of leaders' work and what needs to be done to improve the school further.

The school's plans to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent inspection are effective. They outline clearly and accurately the priorities and actions needed to improve the school.

External support

The school has more recently adopted a policy which supports partnership working with local schools and additional support networks. The school has moved from an isolated position in the local educational community, to one which is collaborative. The school is an active member of the Hull Learning Partnership, making effective use of the support it can provide. In return, the school itself contributes to the partnership in a variety of ways.

I am copying this letter to the chair of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Barry Found
Her Majesty's Inspector