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Mr Simon Cox
Headteacher
The Parker E-ACT Academy
Ashby Road
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Dear Mr Cox

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Parker E-ACT Academy

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and the trust 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:

- continue to develop the curriculum so that learning in all subjects and key stages is ambitious and carefully sequenced to help all pupils to know more and remember more.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and heads of year. I met with officers and the chief executive officer of the E-ACT multi-academy trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I met with pupils, visited lessons and looked at some workbooks. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I reviewed a range of policies and safeguarding records. Various checks were made regarding those pupils who have left the school.

Context

The headteacher left the school shortly after the previous inspection. Trustees appointed interim headteachers as they sought to appoint a new headteacher. The new headteacher took up his post in April 2019. There have been some changes in the senior leadership team. New colleagues have arrived and others have left. Leaders have changed the timings of the school day and have relocated most of the school on to the larger of its sites. The number of pupils on roll has increased by 319 pupils since the previous inspection.

Main findings

Your arrival as the new headteacher last April has brought about a renewed vigour and a clear sense of direction for the school. You have worked with senior leaders to begin to address several weaknesses. You and the staff are bringing about improvements in the quality of education and the behaviour of pupils in particular.

The trust has strengthened leadership across the school. Subject leaders are developing their roles and improving curriculum planning. Heads of year are focused on developing pupils' positive attitudes. Leaders are benefiting from training. They are working to improve teaching and ensure the consistent use of the new behaviour system.

You and the trust are establishing effective systems to monitor the impact of the school's development plan. Leaders and trust officers are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You recognise that provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is still a focus for improvement.

Senior and subject leaders are reviewing curriculum plans across all subjects. These developing plans are ambitious and show when pupils' learning is revisited and built upon. Learning is planned to be stepped and sequenced over the course of each year. These plans provide pupils in key stage 3 with the breadth of learning they need to be prepared for key stage 4. However, these plans have not yet been implemented fully.

Leaders are developing a consistent approach to teaching. Some improvement was seen in the progress made by last year's Year 11 pupils when compared with pupils in 2018. However, pupils are still not doing well enough.

Pupils and staff say that behaviour has improved. Your new approach to behaviour management has brought about a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions. No

pupils have been excluded since your arrival. Pupils understand how the new behaviour system works and say that it is improving behaviour in many classrooms. Pupils were seen to have positive attitudes to their learning in lessons. They conduct themselves respectfully when moving around the school.

Senior leaders have focused on improving pupils' attendance. There has been a slight reduction in the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent. However, too many pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, do not attend regularly enough. You continue to support and challenge parents and carers to value education so that their children attend regularly.

Leadership of the sixth form is beginning to bring about some improvement. Expectations of students are being raised. Leaders are encouraging students to have higher aspirations. Attendance in the sixth form has improved slightly. Subject leaders, as part of the curriculum review, are planning learning that builds on what has been learned previously. However, outcomes remain too low.

You have ensured that safeguarding remains a key focus for the school. Safeguarding leaders know pupils very well and fulfil their responsibilities well. They make sure that all staff receive regular training and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders take appropriate steps to make sure that pupils and their families receive support when needed. Safeguarding records are thorough. All pre-employment checks are carried out before adults work with pupils. Pupils say they feel safe at the school.

Trust leaders continue to provide effective support to the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board and the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector