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Caroline King  
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Dear Miss King

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thomas Fairchild Community School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2021, 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(2) 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge and skills to be able to implement the planned curriculum in all subjects
- raise teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve across the curriculum

- ensure that the new behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff, in and out of the classroom, to further reduce incidents of poor behaviour.

## **Context**

Leaders have needed to restructure staffing across the school due to a fall in the number of pupils on roll. As a result, a significant number of staff have left. Following the national lockdowns, pupils' attendance has returned to pre-COVID levels.

The local authority and the governing body have decided to de-federate the school from the Soaring Skies federation. There is a shared understanding that Thomas Fairchild has not improved quickly enough following the previous inspection in 2020. The local authority is looking for the school to join another federation of local schools.

## **Main findings**

You and the leadership team have not ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection in February 2020 have been addressed sufficiently well. Leaders have improved curriculum plans in all subjects. However, the new curriculum is not being taught as well as it should be across the school. This is preventing pupils from knowing and remembering more in a range of subjects.

COVID-19 restrictions have further slowed your plans for improvement. This includes providing staff with training to teach all aspects of the new curriculum effectively.

Leaders have worked with a partner school to develop a new mathematics curriculum. Staff have received training from the partner school and the local authority to improve their teaching of mathematics. However, progress in implementing the new curriculum is too slow. Teachers are not checking thoroughly what pupils already know in mathematics. They are not building up pupils' mathematical knowledge well. Some pupils have become disengaged with their learning.

Subject leaders have written well-sequenced curriculum plans for all subjects. However, leaders have not ensured that staff are fully trained to implement the new plans. Although the plans set out what subject content pupils should learn, they have not been implemented well across the school. Some teachers do not have the subject knowledge needed to teach all aspects of the curriculum effectively. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not ambitious. Gaps in learning for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not being closed effectively.

Staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. During lessons, some pupils participate in low-level disruption. For example, some pupils talk when the teacher is talking and some swing on their chairs. Pupils do not focus fully on their learning and this stands in the way of them achieving well. Furthermore, incidents of poor behaviour sometimes go unchallenged by staff in the playground. This was also an issue at the previous inspection in February 2020.

Leaders have revised the behaviour policy with a focus on positively reinforcing and rewarding good behaviour. Leaders reported that the incidents of low-level disruption have declined. The number of fixed-term exclusions has also reduced this year. Nevertheless, you recognise that pupils' behaviour has to improve further.

### **Additional support**

You have drawn on support from the other school in the Soaring Skies federation to provide a model for the delivery of the curriculum. However, despite the training staff have received, weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum remain a barrier to all pupils achieving well.

The local authority has been providing regular monitoring visits and support. It has also been working closely with the governing body to identify areas for development and plan for the future direction of the school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the head of school. I also met with other senior leaders, staff and pupils. Meetings were held with representatives of the local authority and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons, listened to pupils read, spoke with staff and pupils, and looked at examples of pupils' work. I looked at documents and the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Vincent  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**