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Jacqui Thompson
Principal
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Snowdon Way
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Dear Mrs Thompson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Compass Academy

Following my visit to your school on 12 January 2022, 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 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing 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 taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the assessment of pupils' prior knowledge so that planning more accurately meets the needs of individual pupils, particularly pupils new to the school

- ensure that in all subjects learning is sequential so that pupils build on what they already know, making sure that leaders carefully prioritise what is essential knowledge, so that this can help pupils fully understand other aspects of their learning.

Context

Since the previous section 5 inspection in 2018 the school has joined the Hope Sentamu Academy Learning Trust. The school transitioned to the new trust in September 2021. Immediately prior to the previous inspection there had been significant changes in the leadership team. There has been a focus on continuous professional development for teaching staff, so that now 90% hold qualified teacher status compared to 50% previously. Staffing throughout the school has been more stable since the 2018 inspection, particularly within the senior leadership team.

Your school has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. You invested in good technical provision prior to the pandemic. This meant that pupils were immediately able to access online learning and, when appropriate, access blended learning. You and your staff worked hard to maintain good pastoral care of the pupils during the height of the pandemic. You kept in regular contact with pupils and their families. You called regularly to see pupils, carrying out many home visits to either check on welfare or sometimes to deliver meals. You and your leadership team took on responsibility for the safeguarding and remote learning provision for 11 extra vulnerable pupils who were transferred temporarily into your school.

Main findings

Your leadership team has prioritised the basic skills and personal development curriculum during the pandemic. Leaders have recognised the need to ensure that pupils do not fall further behind in their English and mathematics skills. In these subjects it is clear how pupils' knowledge is built on over time and that this is helping pupils to improve in these subjects. In some other subjects, for example drama, food and nutrition and careers education, sequential learning is evident. For example, in drama, pupils learn how to take turns and how to share, leading to being able to debate, to empathise and be tolerant of the opinions of others. This knowledge also supports them in other subjects, for example careers education.

You and your senior team have ensured that reading is given a high priority in planning the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to read every day and to build a wide repertoire of vocabulary. Texts are carefully chosen to engage pupils' interests and support the development of oracy skills. Investment has been made in a well-stocked library and in training staff so they can support those pupils who are learning phonics.

Not all subjects are planned well. In some subjects it is not clear what key knowledge and vocabulary pupils need to retain in their long-term memory. The planning for some subjects does not ensure that pupils have the right prior knowledge to understand what teachers are teaching them. For example, pupils have a lesson planned to help them to

learn tolerance of those with different religious beliefs. However, there is no structured planning to learn about cultural or religious differences. Pupils do not have the background knowledge to understand why people with different religious beliefs may dress differently, for example. Therefore, they may struggle to be tolerant of difference as they do not understand the reasoning behind it. In the life-skills curriculum, pupils learn about Nelson Mandela. However, as they do not have a good knowledge of apartheid, they do not have a good understanding of why he did what he did.

From when pupils join the school, teachers regularly assess what they know so that they can adjust planning accordingly. Missed learning during the pandemic has meant that adaptations to the curriculum take place more than they normally would. Occasionally, pupils' prior knowledge is not judged accurately. You and your leadership team are aware that, sporadically, assessment is not accurate enough. You are looking at the different assessment forms, particularly at the beginning of each learning unit and for new pupils, to refine them further.

Pupils said during the inspection that they liked the school. Pupils told me how they had been made to feel welcome and that they had quickly built good relationships. Pupils enjoy being listened to. They also commented that it is good that they get time to sit and read.

Staff all said that they are well supported by senior leaders. They feel that a good work-life balance is a high priority. All staff receive very regular safeguarding training and updates. They are all confident about their ability to recognise and deal with any concerns. Every single member of staff I spoke to said they would not hesitate to report anything that made them feel uncomfortable.

Additional support

School staff already speak positively of the links they make with other schools in the new trust. They say that the impact of joining the new trust has not yet materialised in changes in the day-to-day life in school. However, leaders have organised network meetings and some leaders have already worked with other schools in the trust. The chief executive officer of the trust has high expectations for the school. She spoke of the subject-specialism support that will be available to subject leaders. She expects that this will support the rapid building of a whole curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge. The senior leadership team actively seeks the support from external agencies. This particularly supports the work the team does in addressing pupils' mental and social health needs.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, staff, representatives of the local governing committee (LGC) and the trust board to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Some members of the LGC and the trust board attended meetings virtually. I spoke to pupils as I visited

lessons with a member of the senior leadership team. Alongside senior leaders I considered curriculum planning and pupils' work in books. I studied the school's development plan. I checked the record of recruitment checks and held a meeting which focused on safeguarding.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the LGC, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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 reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector