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Laurie Cornwell
Principal
The Pride Academy
Falling Lane
Yiewsley
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Dear Ms Cornwell

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Pride Academy

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 June 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2021. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second 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:

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 June 2022

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been several significant changes. The trust appointed its deputy CEO as the long-term interim principal from 21 February 2022. The former acting principal has returned to her post as vice-principal and other senior leaders returned from maternity leave. This has increased and strengthened leadership capacity.

The school moved to a new purpose-built site in April 2022. Trustees renamed the school from The Young People's Academy to The Pride Academy. The trust has applied to the Department for Education to change the school's status to that of a free school.

On this inspection, the inspector focused on pupils' behaviour and safeguarding.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders have raised expectations for both pupils and staff. After the last inspection, they launched a 'respect our school' campaign. This included improving the condition of the old site. Leaders also did much work with pupils to prepare them for the move to the new site. Leaders underpinned their higher expectations by promoting a new agreed set of values. These include respect and empathy. Leaders, supported by trust consultants, revamped the behaviour policies and procedures. Consultation on these included inputs from pupil groups. Pupils continue to make suggestions by taking on responsibilities. Some are health and safety ambassadors or respect and empathy ambassadors. Pupils feel that they are valued and appreciate the improvements made to the facilities, including the new building. They are taking responsibility for keeping the premises in good order. Incidents of property damage are now infrequent, and the severity has much lessened. The site is clear of litter, there is no graffiti and it is kept tidy.

Leaders have reviewed their recording, reporting and analysis of behaviour and safeguarding incidents. They are making better use of the information available to them. For example, they analyse information to determine emerging patterns and identify underlying causes. Leaders have also revised every pupil's support plan. These bring together, in one place, a broad range of information about every pupil. It includes tailored strategies that work well for them and ongoing risk assessments. All staff have access to these, and this enables them to know and support each pupil in a bespoke manner.

Leaders and staff meet daily to discuss all incidents that are a cause for concern. Through improved training, staff and therapists have the skills to follow up on issues effectively. They help pupils to understand their behaviours and recognise the triggers that caused them to make wrong choices. Staff help pupils develop strategies for making better choices in the future. School information shows that, for example, incidents of assaults and absconding from class have reduced. With the new site security, pupils are unable to truant from the site.

With the move to the new site, leaders have introduced new opportunities for pupils. All pupils enjoy taking part in an enrichment activity every day. There is a range of options, and pupils can choose what they would like to do each day. Leaders also introduced a new electronic points reward system. Pupils have online access and can track their progress in accumulating positive points. With enough points, they can go on fun trips such as to a theme park. These opportunities motivate pupils to behave well.

Leaders have started reviewing the subjects across the curriculum. They are working with colleagues in the trust and other schools, and with consultants. They have thought more about what they want pupils to know and remember. They have considered the order in which they want pupils to gain and build new knowledge. Furthermore, there are much-improved teaching facilities and resources at the new site. Pupils said that because of these improvements, they are enjoying their learning more. The school environment is calm, both in class and during social times. Pupils are more engaged. Low-level disruption, should it occur, is dealt with in a quick, calm and appropriate way.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. There is a large safeguarding team. They work effectively with the local authority and other external agencies. They make sure that staff get regular safeguarding training. Trust leaders support and check safeguarding practices to ensure that they are robust. Pupils say they have adults that they can trust and approach if they have any concerns. They feel safe and secure and know they will get any help that they need.

Leaders have had to set high expectations for staff. They have initiated change at a fast pace. They have required staff to attend lots of training. Staff have had to put in place a raft of new policies and procedures. Even so, most staff are very positive and welcome the changes. They see how these are beneficial for both the pupils and themselves. They said that leaders are open and approachable and considerate of workload issues. Through the trust, staff are also able to access support such as counselling supervision.

Trust and school leaders are taking appropriate actions. There is evidence of an increasingly positive impact. Leaders are aware that they need to do more to build on these initial steps. They aim to embed strong, effective, consistent and sustained improvements. In due course, this will also mean appointing a suitable substantive principal. They also need to further stabilise staffing in some curriculum areas, such as mathematics.

Additional support

Ongoing consultancy support, sharing of expertise and resources, plus accountability measures provided by the trust are making a considerable contribution to driving improvements.

Safeguarding leaders have a constructive working relationship with the local authority and other external agencies. They also benefit from support and challenge from independent

external consultants. All of these are supporting leaders in driving improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviours and supporting their safety and welfare.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal and other senior school leaders and some subject leaders, the multi-academy trust CEO and the chair of the local governing body. He also had telephone conversations with two separate local authority officers and spoke with parents or carers of four different pupils. The inspector had formal meetings with groups of pupils and a large group of staff, including teachers, support and administrative staff. The inspector toured the site and outdoor area and observed pupils' arrival and departure from school. He observed pupils' behaviour at the start and end of the school day, at breaktime and lunchtime and between lessons. He had informal discussions with pupils and staff. He took into account the responses to the staff survey. There were insufficient responses to the parents' survey to take the responses into account.