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David Lees
Executive Principal
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Dear Mr Lees

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Clacton Coastal Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 30 March 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, senior leaders, representatives of the multi-academy trust and the interim standards board, which included representation from the local authority and an external trust, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also examined planning and monitoring documentation of the interim standards board, visited lessons, observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes, met with pupils, reviewed safeguarding procedures and examined parental survey responses. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Clacton Coastal Academy continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that pupils behave well in all lessons and that 'hot spots', where low-level disruption can occur, are effectively addressed.

- Ensure that teachers have further training and guidance to improve their teaching, including effectively adapting their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Main findings

Since the last inspection, the makeup of the interim standards board has remained unchanged and has continued to fulfil governance responsibilities. You have continued to strengthen leadership across the school. Effective re-structuring work has taken place to ensure that the leadership structure is fit for purpose. A new vice principal was appointed at the start of the academic year to focus on attendance and inclusion. You have also appointed a curriculum leader for religious education and ensured that the special educational needs coordinator is now fully qualified.

You have reviewed the breadth and quality of your curriculum offer to ensure it better meets the ambition of the national curriculum. For instance, you have ensured that pupils now have the opportunity to study a language across year groups. At key stage 4, almost all pupils now study science and can make a free choice about studying geography or history. You have ensured that statutory responsibilities for religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are now met. You have provided training for staff to improve the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum. For example, a smaller team of staff have been trained in PSHE to ensure they are confident and appropriately skilled to be able to deliver it more effectively. You appointed a new curriculum leader for religious education, who has effectively developed the curriculum and ensured subject staff have the skills they need to deliver it well. You have developed the subject-specific expertise of staff in computing but recognise that there is still further work required to fully embed effective practice.

You have worked with the trust to drive forward the reading culture, so that it is no longer in its infancy. Key barriers to pupils learning to read fluently are now systematically identified. Pupils receive tailored support to help them to address these barriers. The impact of this support is carefully monitored to ensure its effectiveness. You have worked to grow pupils' love of reading by introducing reading time at the start of each school day. You have developed the library, so that pupils now have access to a range of high-quality books and texts. You are starting to integrate more subject-specific reading opportunities and vocabulary into the curriculum but recognise that further work is required to embed this. You have ensured staff have been trained in how to use plans that identify the most effective strategies to support pupils with SEND. However, staff do not make the adaptations recommended in these plans consistently well. You are aware of this and are working to achieve greater consistency, so that all pupils with SEND can achieve well.

You and your team have taken decisive action to improve internal support for pupils' behaviour needs, which has significantly reduced reliance on alternative provision for this purpose. You have introduced clearer routines and have increased leaders' presence around the school. This has created a calmer environment. Leaders now focus on the root cause of pupils' behaviour and what can be done to support pupils to address this.

Consequently, behaviour is improving as most pupils follow expectations and get the support they need to modify their behaviour. However, in a minority of classes, pupils still report that their learning is disrupted, as teachers are not consistent in how they implement the behaviour policy. You have invested in adding additional pastoral staffing capacity to support pupils' wider needs. There are a range of effective well-being and mental health interventions that pupils can access. You have created a specific well-being team and an area that provides safe spaces for pupils to go whenever they need. Students really value these and feel confident they have a range of people they can turn to for support.

The interim standards board continues to provide support and challenge to you and school leaders and bring about improvement. This has included facilitating support from other schools that have strengths in areas that you are seeking to improve. The trust's regional and national directors have worked alongside school leaders and have provided effective guidance, challenge and support. For example, the trust national director of education has played a key role in supporting the development of reading.

You have worked effectively with the local authority and members of other multi-academy trusts. This has included them being represented as members of the interim standards board to provide support, challenge and an external view of the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

James Chester
His Majesty's Inspector