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Alison Ramsay
Executive headteacher
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Dear Ms Ramsay

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Nicholas Chamberlaine School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 18 July 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 and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, trustees and other local governors 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 visited lessons, met with staff, spoke to pupils, viewed pupils' work and scrutinised documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Nicholas Chamberlaine School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection, you have taken action to strengthen leadership at all levels. This has increased the leadership capacity in school and has helped to bring about change. This includes an additional appointment to the school leadership team, an additional special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, lead practitioners and a family outreach officer. You have restructured the pastoral team so that it consists of both teaching and support staff.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and work tirelessly to this end. They want each pupil to be the very best they can be. This ambition has been at the centre of their work to improve the school. Trust leaders share this ambition and provide leaders with effective support and challenge.

Leaders have worked with purpose to improve the quality of education. Their starting point for this work was to review, then revise or rewrite, the curriculum in each subject. This has led to subject curriculums that are well sequenced and set out the knowledge and skills pupils will learn as they progress through their studies. For instance, in modern foreign languages, pupils build their grammatical knowledge of tenses carefully and cumulatively as they progress through key stage 3.

Leaders' determination to improve the quality of education has been supported effectively by the trust. Trust leaders have drawn on the subject and teaching expertise from other schools in the trust. They have given subject leaders time to discuss, improve and evolve their curriculums. This is complemented by teachers working together in school to share good practice, develop resources and talk about how to best deliver the curriculum to pupils.

Leaders have introduced the language of 'remember, know and do' into each lesson. This structure aims to help pupils recall important knowledge, develop new knowledge and then use it to complete the work set. Teachers provide clear explanations and look to adapt their teaching within this structure so that pupils learn well. Leaders know that there is still work to do so that all staff use this framework effectively. In some instances, pupils do not have sufficient time to recall prior learning or get the explanations they need if they are revisiting something that they did not initially understand.

Leaders have focused on ensuring that pupils with SEND get the help and support they need. They carefully review each pupil's identified need when they join the school and are alert to any emerging need. Leaders share relevant information about pupils with teachers and they make regular checks to ensure that this information is being used in classrooms. Teachers increasingly see themselves as 'teachers of SEND'. To support pupils with SEND further, leaders have trialled and are now introducing a short-term intervention for pupils in key stage 3. This aims to help pupils build the skills they need so that they can fully access the curriculum.

Leaders have continued to prioritise reading. Pupils who need additional support to consolidate their phonic knowledge are identified when they join the school. They then get additional input from trained adults. Leaders have done much to increase the range and volume of pupils' reading. This is building a culture where pupils read widely and often.

Following the previous inspection, leaders acted to improve pupils' behaviour in school. As part of this work, staff teach pupils how to behave, and model the behaviours that they expect to see in classrooms and corridors. This is based on a culture of mutual respect and care. This work has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. There are, however, a

minority of pupils who find managing their behaviour difficult. Their behaviour continues to impact on other pupils' learning. To address this, leaders are launching a new 'in-house' alternative provision in the autumn term. They plan to provide pupils with the support they need to improve their behaviour while ensuring that they are still learning the school curriculum.

Trust leaders have been outward-looking in seeking external support to help improve the school. They have sourced training for leaders and teachers that ties in with the areas of school that need to improve. Alongside this, when evaluating the impact of leaders' actions, trust leaders have used external expertise to validate their own view. This has helped them to form an accurate picture of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
His Majesty's Inspector