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Penny Alford
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Dear Penny Alford

Urgent inspection of Everest Community Academy

Following my visit with Ally Aldridge-Gibbons and Louise Walker, His Majesty's Inspectors, and Mary Davies, Ofsted Inspector, to the school on 30 January 2024, I write on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss the school.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for urgent inspections. The inspection was carried out because His Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school as concerns had been raised with Ofsted about the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), behaviour and attitudes of pupils, and the personal development of pupils at the school.

We do not give graded judgements on urgent inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a graded inspection, which will be carried out under section 5 of the Act and be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the urgent inspection as a graded inspection immediately.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the interim headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. We also spoke with the chief executive officer of the trust along with other members of the trust and a member of the local governing body.

Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with pupils and staff throughout the inspection as well as meeting pupils in different groups. We also considered the views of parents that were given through Parent View.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Main findings

Despite only being in post as interim headteacher for a short period of time, you have taken swift and effective action to improve pupil behaviour and to ensure that these improvements are keeping pupils safe. These actions have included the use of sanctions where needed as well as a thoughtful approach to providing support to pupils.

The culture of safeguarding in the school is particularly strong. The safeguarding team are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils face and they ensure that this knowledge is shared with all staff through well-planned training. The impact of this training is monitored to ensure that it is making a difference. Staff and pupils are confident in how to report concerns. However, leaders are aware of the need to continue building the confidence of pupils in making such reports. There are close working relationships with external agencies, including local schools, and this enables pupils to get the help they need in a timely manner. The trust and governors are providing effective support in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding at the school and leaders are quick to put in place any improvements that are needed.

Leaders in the trust identified that there had been a decline in standards in the school last year. They took quick action to make sure that the right leadership was in place and that staff received the support they needed to reverse this decline. The school recognised that the behaviour of a small group of pupils was leading to other pupils being unsafe. This has now been resolved but it resulted in a rise in the use of exclusions and suspensions. However, the use of exclusions and suspensions has now fallen sharply as behaviour has improved. The school is also making less use of alternative provision and has created their own bespoke in-house provision to help those pupils who need additional support. Early indications are that this is proving effective in meeting those needs and keeping pupils at risk of exclusion in the school and involved in education.

Pupils now rarely truant from lessons. The school ensures that those pupils who are not where they are meant to be are identified, located and supported to return to class. This is helping to create a much calmer atmosphere around the school and reduce disturbance to lessons. However, there is still too much low-level distraction in class with pupils not engaging in their work. This is not always being challenged by staff. The work that pupils are asked to complete in class sometimes lacks ambition or is not structured appropriately. At times, this leaves pupils unsure about what they are meant to be doing. Work in pupils' books is often incomplete or of a poor standard. The school is already

taking steps to improve the quality of education that pupils receive, having prioritised improving behaviour.

You and your team are very aware of the importance of pupils attending school and effective action is being taken to improve attendance. The school is working well with parents and the wider community to address concerns and the barriers to attendance. The work done by the family engagement team is particularly strong in helping to ensure that pupils are in school. Although attendance is still slightly below the national average, it continues to improve and there have been notable improvements for some of the most vulnerable pupils that the school works with.

The school has put in place an appropriate curriculum to address the personal development needs of its pupils. This includes working with a range of external bodies to address concerns around the health and safety of specific groups of pupils. This curriculum is responsive to needs as they arise and is helping to prepare pupils for life beyond school.

The trust is committed to providing on-going support to ensure that the rapid improvements that have been made are sustained in the long term. They have secured the appointment of a substantive headteacher who will join the school in the spring but with the continued presence of the interim headteacher to help create a smooth transition. The trust ensure that staff receive effective support, including supervision for the safeguarding team and networks for middle leaders. Trust-wide leaders and local governors are frequently in the school and they understand its context very well. They share a clear vision for the school and a well-considered plan to make this vision a reality.

Priorities for further improvement

- At times, pupils struggle to concentrate in class due to low-level disruption. This prevents them learning as well as they should. Not all staff are challenging this disruption or following the school's processes to tackle the problem. The school needs to ensure that all staff share the same high expectations of pupil behaviour and take a consistent approach to ensuring these high expectations are met.
- The curriculum is not always well implemented. Too often, pupils are given work that does not challenge them or tasks that are not well structured. This is leading to poorer pupil outcomes. The school needs to make sure that there are shared high expectations for what pupils can achieve and put in place the teaching approaches that will support these achievements.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Enser
His Majesty's Inspector