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Ms Hellen Bolton
Headteacher
Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science With Mathematics School
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Dear Ms Bolton

Special measures monitoring inspection of Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science With Mathematics School

Following my visit with Janet Gabanski and David Pridding, Ofsted Inspectors to your school on 31 January and 1 February 2018, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2017. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive school governance committee (ESGC), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2017.

- Improve the accuracy of leaders' judgements about the school's work by:
 - ensuring that the school's plans set out precise and timely measures of the impact that school development actions are expected to have
 - making sure that senior leaders check the accuracy and consistency of the information they gather on pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that middle leaders have sufficient opportunities to monitor the work of their teams and to intervene promptly to improve the consistency and impact of teaching.
- Improve governance at the school by ensuring that:
 - governors have a realistic view of how well the school is doing, based on accurate information
 - governors promptly develop their skills and understanding so that they are better able to hold leaders to account for their work
 - the findings of the review of governance recommended by the lead inspector are acted upon promptly and the impact of any recommended actions is measured carefully.
- Rapidly improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is similar to that of pupils nationally by:
 - rigorously monitoring the attendance of these pupils and acting promptly to reduce absence
 - further reducing fixed-term exclusions so that these pupils spend as much time as possible in school
 - ensuring that the implementation of the school's planned initiative to reduce absence through the work of a recently appointed, additional designated member of staff is very carefully and rigorously monitored by senior leaders and governors and that its impact is regularly reviewed.
- Significantly reduce variations in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations of all pupils, but especially those who are disadvantaged, so that they make rapid and sustained progress that is similar to, or exceeds, that of pupils nationally
 - all staff use the school's detailed information about individual pupils consistently to refine planning and focus their teaching so that disadvantaged pupils in particular make the progress that they should
 - all staff follow the agreed school policy of giving pupils regular indications of

what they need to do to improve their learning, which are subsequently acted on

- staff develop their expertise by having more opportunities to share the good practice that exists in the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 31 January and 1 February 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders and three members of the interim ESGC. They met with representatives from the Pontefract Academy Trust, including the chief executive officer and the principal attendance officer. Inspectors spoke with subject coordinators, teachers and pupils and had a phone conversation with the school improvement adviser. Inspectors observed teaching across a range of subjects. Some of the visits to classrooms were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a series of tours of the school to see learning in progress.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, a teacher of mathematics has been appointed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have continued to tackle the weaknesses highlighted in the previous inspection. Leaders have worked hard to sustain the momentum of improvement.

Senior leaders have raised the bar of expectations further. Subject coordinators are now starting to play a central role in checking the work of teachers and improving teaching. Senior leaders have provided effective support, and the confidence and capability of many subject coordinators are growing. Subject coordinators now make more effective checks on teaching and are using improvement plans to accurately target further improvement.

However, some subject coordinators lag behind. They continue to have an over-rosy view of how well things are going, coupled with vague and imprecise improvement plans. Senior leaders are well aware of this and recognise that this is a key priority for improvement.

Senior leaders continue to improve their own checks on the work of subject coordinators. Together they have developed a 'show-me' approach that requires subject coordinators to provide evidence that pupils are actually making the progress that they say they are making. This is working well. Senior leaders now spot early warning signs when teachers stray from agreed whole-school approaches to feedback.

ESGC members are developing a better strategic overview, particularly in relation to how well pupils are doing at key stage 4. Their visits to school reassure them that leaders are developing an increasingly accurate picture of what is working well and what still needs to improve.

ESGC members have also benefited from speaking with a range of different senior leaders. This has helped the ESGC better understand issues related to the curriculum, behaviour management and attendance. Members of the ESGC are benefiting from having sharper improvement plans and are able to ask pertinent and challenging questions about the impact leaders are having, particularly on disadvantaged pupils. Members of the ESGC recognise that they now need to have a more informed overview of how well pupils in key stage 3 are doing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders have embedded a set of clear basic classroom expectations that all teachers should follow. Pupils confirm that these are starting to have a positive effect on their learning. Teachers are more consistent in the way they engage pupils at the start of lessons and there is a growing sense of urgency in some classrooms that there is not a moment of learning time to lose.

Leaders have made sure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is on everyone's radar. Pupils confirm that they feel many of their teachers are more effective in helping them when they are stuck and this, in turn, is building pupils' confidence and a belief in themselves.

Teachers are now getting into the habit of following the school's assessment and feedback policy. Sometimes, pupils act upon this feedback and this helps them make better progress.

However, teachers do not make as much use of pupils' information as they could, particularly in challenging the least able and the most able pupils. As a result, some pupils find the work too easy or too challenging. Some teachers are still too accepting of poorly presented work, especially from lower-attaining pupils.

The senior leader in charge of teaching has taken effective steps to enable teachers to work together to improve their teaching. This sharing of effective practice and learning from each other have seen some improvements in terms of pupils' behaviour, engagement and enjoyment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Attendance is starting to show signs of improvement, including for disadvantaged pupils. The school's slogan 'attend today achieve tomorrow' is gaining traction and staff all recognise that they have a role to play in improving attendance. Through the use of weekly rewards, competitions, assemblies and tutor time, pupils, parents

and carers are starting to get the message that good attendance is vital. Leaders have successfully trialled 'attendance forms' for poor attenders and this has started to have a positive impact on many pupils' attendance.

School leaders have shown dogged determination to improve attendance. They have recently started to uncover some of the reasons why some pupils do not attend regularly. Pupils' anxiety and issues with well-being have been identified as a key theme and leaders are currently exploring ways in which they can prevent this leading to poor attendance.

There are now clear and well-embedded approaches to consistently managing pupils' behaviour. Teachers use these systems well and escalate sanctions when necessary. However, when this is not successful, teachers provide pupils with a chance to turn their behaviour around with a conversation at the end of the lesson. This, coupled with better links with parents, is seeing the rate of exclusions and incidence of poor behaviour declining.

Senior leaders are a visible presence at the start of the school day as they stand by the school gates encouraging pupils to be punctual. There are now clear sanctions for lateness and these are used consistently. As a result, punctuality to school is improving.

Pupils confirm that health and safety procedures are now consistently followed in design and technology. Pupils rightly raised concerns about the state of their toilets, with a number of cubicles not having locks and, in one instance, a missing door. School leaders have responded quickly to this and are currently working to improve the state of the toilets.

There has been a very recent review of how the pupil premium funding is spent. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of the recommendations resulting from the review.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders have a clear and accurate overview of how well current pupils are achieving. This continues to show a mixed picture. English remains one of the stronger subjects across the school. Pupils do well in practical subjects, including music, dance and art at key stage 3, but not as well at key stage 4. Staffing issues have had some impact on the progress key stage 3 pupils are making in science and mathematics. The progress pupils are making in history and geography is inconsistent across both key stages 3 and 4.

At key stage 4, in-school information indicates that more Year 11 pupils are on track to achieve their target grades compared to the previous Year 11, including disadvantaged pupils.

Senior leaders meet with subject coordinators on a fortnightly basis to keep a careful eye on the progress pupils are making. Current in-school information suggests that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is diminishing.

External support

Teachers are continuing to benefit from the links they have with The King's School. This is continuing to improve the accuracy of teacher assessments, particularly at key stage 4. Teachers are also receiving helpful advice and support for new courses that are being taught. This is helping teachers share effective practice and build their confidence.

The external school improvement partner has provided effective help and support. This has enabled leaders to identify some of the barriers preventing some pupils from attending school regularly.

Governors have spent some time considering the value of receiving hints and tips on the type of questions Ofsted inspectors may ask them during an inspection. This is not a good use of their time. Governors now recognise that their time could be better spent focusing on the features of effective governance over time.