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14 May 2015

Mrs Victoria White
Headteacher
Bridgemary School
Wych Lane
Gosport
PO13 0JN

Dear Mrs White

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bridgemary School

Following my visit with Victor Chaffey, Additional Inspector to your academy on 12 and 13 May 2015, 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 which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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:

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Education Funding Agency, the Chief Executive of The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of all pupils
 - use information from assessments to plan work that matches the full range of abilities and actively engages all pupils in learning
 - check pupils' understanding as lessons progress and adapt their teaching when necessary to enable all pupils to make at least good progress
 - manage pupils' behaviour more effectively so that pupils are focused on their learning and no-one is able to interrupt or disrupt a lesson.

- Raise pupils' achievement to enable all to make better progress, and close the gaps in achievement between different groups of learners by:
 - closely checking pupils' performance to identify any underachievement and rapidly giving support to those pupils who are in danger of falling behind
 - ensuring that procedures for setting targets for pupils' achievement are underpinned by high expectations and are used consistently across the school
 - reviewing the appropriateness of the length of lessons in every subject.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the academy's behaviour management system in a firm and consistent manner
 - establishing clear criteria for the use of the Inclusion Room through imposing clear boundaries and consequences, and setting challenging and well-targeted work for students.

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that leaders' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear so that the variation in effectiveness of both senior and middle leadership is eradicated
 - holding all teachers to account robustly for the quality of their teaching, assessment, behaviour management and pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that teachers are provided with precise and thorough feedback about their performance, and that they follow the advice given in order to improve their teaching
 - providing teachers with high-quality training and support that enable them to improve their teaching and to plan lessons which are well matched to the pupils' ages and abilities
 - ensuring that the work of the governing body has a demonstrable impact on school improvement
 - ensuring the pupil premium funding is closely monitored and spent appropriately to raise the achievement of eligible pupils.

An external review of the academy'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 11 and 12 May 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, two groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative from The Kennal Academies Trust. Inspectors observed 14 lessons, 10 of which were seen jointly with senior staff.

Aspects of safeguarding were checked. Inspectors visited an assembly and tutor group sessions and spoke to students informally at breaktimes.

Context

One teacher has left the school since the last monitoring inspection. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in February this year. A new head of mathematics joined the academy the day before this inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Students' achievement is improving. Internal assessments indicate that a considerable increase in the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five good GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, is possible this year. Senior leaders have put in place a range of effective checks to ensure teachers' assessments of how well students are doing are more accurate than in the past. This has included working with other local schools to verify teachers' judgements.

Students are being set more challenging targets, and students who spoke to inspectors said that more is expected of them. Students are making better progress in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, where the proportions of students making expected progress are close to national figures. Not enough students are making more than expected progress, often because they are not stretched enough by the work they are given. Girls are making better progress than boys, especially in Key Stage 3.

Gaps between students who receive pupil premium funding (additional government funding) and their classmates are closing as a result of valuable help, support and encouragement. Not all disabled students and those with special educational needs are yet making enough progress and a minority are underachieving. However, these issues have been identified by senior leaders and they are taking appropriate action to address them.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving, so that a higher proportion is now good or better. Teachers have benefited from a variety of targeted training and support. Teachers have worked hard to improve their practice and make the changes asked of them. Their efforts are bearing fruit in terms of improvements in students' progress. Some teaching continues to require improvement and senior leaders are taking decisive steps to support staff to improve with appropriate urgency.

The quality of teaching in mathematics has significantly improved under the effective and stable leadership of the deputy headteacher. A consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics has been established and expectations have been raised because teachers have been given time to plan together and to share good practice.

Teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan lessons to meet a range of students' needs. However, the most able students are not always challenged quickly enough and they spend too much time completing work that is too easy.

In lessons where students make the best progress, teachers skilfully check students' understanding and adapt their approaches appropriately. Where progress is weaker, teachers do not always test students' grasp of ideas well enough to address gaps in knowledge or to provide additional challenge.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is improving. Students are polite, friendly and welcoming. Students move around the academy in a calm and purposeful way. Positive relationships exist between staff and students. Students in Key Stage 4 who spoke to inspectors said they appreciate being able to support younger students through the house system. Records show that incidents of bullying and racist behaviour have significantly declined since September 2014.

Senior leaders have strengthened their response to poor behaviour by effectively introducing a new behaviour management system. As a result, since the last monitoring inspection, there has been a significant increase in the number of sanctions being applied to deal with poor behaviour; for example, the number of fixed-term exclusions is above national levels. The poor behaviour of a few students is no longer tolerated. Figures recorded by the academy show that in recent weeks, there has been a sharp decline in the use of sanctions, as students have realised that consistent consequences will be applied for poor behaviour and that expectations of behaviour have been raised. The majority of students now behave well in lessons and are keen to learn.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher continues to lead the academy with focus and commitment. She maintains high expectations of students and staff. She has tackled the underperformance of some teachers robustly and this has led to changes in staffing since the inspection in October 2014. She communicates her aim that students are given every opportunity to make good progress effectively. This has raised ambitions for the future and brought a renewed sense of purpose to the academy. The headteacher is well supported by the senior team, who now have well-defined areas of responsibility. Students and staff attribute improvements in the academy to better leadership.

Better systems for checking and tracking students' achievement mean leaders monitor students' progress more closely and give help more quickly to those who are in danger of falling behind. While Year 11 students have benefited from a wide range of support to improve their progress, these strategies are not yet used to the same extent in other year groups.

Senior leaders judge the quality of teaching accurately, drawing on a range of information, for example lesson observations and work in students' books. Teachers are given detailed and specific feedback about the strengths and areas for development in their practice. Leaders' analysis of teachers' development needs is used to provide effective training and support.

The academy is continuing to improve how closely it works with parents. A parent forum has recently been created and is providing a valuable platform for parents to give feedback and express their views. The revamped academy newsletter has a sharper focus on matters related to teaching and learning. This is helping to raise the profile and importance of these issues with parents.

The recently appointed Chair of Governors brings a wealth of relevant experience and skill to the post. As a result, she has identified appropriate areas where governors need to strengthen their practice and the training needed to achieve this. Governors are using the more comprehensive assessment information given to them to challenge senior leaders about the progress being made.

External support

The academy draws effectively on a range of support from external sources. The executive headteacher provided by TKAT continues to provide strong challenge and support to the headteacher. TKAT's director of education for Hampshire has a good understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development, as a result of her frequent visits to the academy. TKAT have successfully secured the services of an experienced Chair of the Governing Body. Non-specialist mathematics teachers have benefited from valuable training provided by the on-going link with Thornden

Teaching School Alliance. Hampshire local authority advisers have provided effective behaviour management training which has helped to support improvements in students' behaviour.