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26 October 2015

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

Dear Mrs White

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Bridgemary School**

Following my visit with Helena Read, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Mary Hoather, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 6 and 7 October 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 third 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:

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

The academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and the 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 Kennal Academies Trust (TKAT), the Chair of the Governing Body 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 students
  - use information from assessments to plan work that matches the full range of abilities and actively engages all students in learning
  - check students' understanding as lessons progress and adapt their teaching when necessary to enable all students to make at least good progress
  - manage students' behaviour more effectively so that students are focused on their learning and no-one is able to interrupt or disrupt a lesson.
  
- Raise students' achievement to enable all to make better progress, and close the gaps in achievement between different groups of learners by:
  - closely checking students' performance to identify any underachievement and rapidly giving support to those students who are in danger of falling behind
  - ensuring that procedures for setting targets for students' achievement are underpinned by high expectations and are used consistently across the academy
  - reviewing the appropriateness of the length of lessons in every subject.
  
- Improve students' 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 students' 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 students' 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 students.

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 third monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 October 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior and middle leaders, two groups of students, four members of the governing body, and a representative of TKAT. Inspectors observed 19 lessons, 13 of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Aspects of safeguarding were checked. Inspectors looked at English and mathematics books from a selection of students in Years 9 and 11. Inspectors also spoke to students informally at break and lunchtimes.

### **Context**

Eleven teachers joined the academy at the start of this term. Four new governors have joined the governing body.

### **Outcomes for students**

Outcomes for the 2015 examinations were disappointing and showed a decline in standards achieved in 2014. The results did not match the predictions made by the academy and were significantly below standards achieved nationally.

Current students are making better progress. This progress is stronger in English than in mathematics. In a range of subjects, students are increasingly producing a better quality and quantity of work that more closely reflects their ability. The next two terms will be crucial for the academy to show that students continue to make accelerated progress in order to catch up with where they should be. Teachers more frequently plan lessons that are better matched to students' needs, but there remains a lack of challenge, particularly for middle-ability students. This prevents these students from achieving higher levels of learning. Students who spoke to inspectors said they wanted to be able to tackle more difficult work more often.

Gaps between disadvantaged students, disabled students, those with special educational needs and their peers are closing. In most year groups, these students are making similar and sometimes better progress than their classmates. This is a result of better teaching and more effective use of additional funding to provide appropriate help to these students. The thoughtful reorganisation of more students to mixed-ability groups means that disadvantaged students are no longer disproportionately represented in lower-ability sets. In making these changes, leaders have acted effectively on the recommendations of the external review of the academy's use of pupil premium funding carried out last term.

Leaders now track students' progress with equal rigour in both key stages. They use their analysis of this information more effectively to identify and more quickly support students who are in danger of underachieving.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teachers more frequently plan lessons that sustain students' interest. Where teaching is strongest, it challenges students to think deeply and creatively. The academy has successfully fostered a culture of staff learning together and from each other to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.

Lesson planning consistently follows the academy's policy and ensures that lessons are purposeful. While expectations of students' behaviour are high, this is not always matched by the highest expectations for their learning. As a result, middle-ability students are not given enough opportunities to attempt more challenging work and this often puts a 'cap' on what they can achieve. Where teaching is stronger, students' curiosity is well developed so that they explore new ideas, apply their thinking and test their understanding.

Recent valuable training on questioning is paying dividends as teachers are now using a range of techniques more effectively to check students' understanding. Teachers are no longer willing to accept an 'I don't know' response from students. This means that students are ready to provide answers, which is helping to develop their knowledge and confidence.

Students appreciate the useful feedback they receive from teachers because it helps them improve their work and make better progress. Students' books indicate that this practice is well embedded in the routine of the academy. Students increasingly respond to their teachers' advice in meaningful ways to make improvements to their work.

The promotion of students' literacy skills is a feature of more effective teaching. Teachers frequently identify and correct students' errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in a range of subjects. Further work is required to develop numeracy skills across subjects.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Behaviour is improving. Students conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner around the academy site. They are respectful and courteous. Generally students take a pride in their work and are keen to progress and improve. Any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly and fairly by staff, who consistently apply the academy's behaviour management policy. There are no racist or bullying incidents recorded for this term, compared with 10 incidents for the same period last year.

This shows that the changes to behaviour management are bearing fruit, and students agree.

The number of exclusions has dramatically reduced compared with the same period last year. Academy information shows that disadvantaged students and boys are more likely to be excluded than other groups of students. The use of the academy's isolation room for incidents of poor behaviour has also significantly reduced. However, its use by the science and modern foreign languages departments is greater than its use by others. Leaders have refined and improved systems to track trends in behaviour and attendance, and are beginning to use this information to tackle areas of concern more effectively.

Attendance, although improved, remains slightly below national figures.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteacher has made a robust and measured response to the poor examination results achieved by Year 11 students in the summer. She has led a critical and comprehensive review of the actions taken to support Year 11 students. As a result, current students benefit from a wider range of help, more closely matched to their specific needs and gaps in their understanding. A number of these initiatives are bold and creative in their approach. For example, all senior leaders are delivering daily Year 11 tutor group sessions to help ensure that learning in lessons is reinforced at every opportunity. The headteacher continues to communicate and exemplify high expectations to staff and students. Everyone understands the role they are expected to play in moving the academy forwards. As one student explained to an inspector, 'We are under pressure, but it is a good pressure.'

Middle leaders have a much clearer shared sense of purpose and are taking more responsibility to drive improvements in their areas. Leaders of English and mathematics have been particularly effective in raising expectations and developing practices that support improvement. Their actions are beginning to be shared with other leaders whose skills are not so well developed.

The executive headteacher has provided strong leadership relating to the use of the pupil premium (additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils). Leaders have a secure understanding of the different characteristics and needs of this group of students, and have carefully checked what type of help has worked best. Consequently, there is a wide range of individual support available to students and their families. Leaders are aware that information about the support students receive is not shared well enough with all teachers. Plans are in place to address this.

The coordinator for special educational needs has effectively reviewed and refined the systems and structures for giving students additional help. As a result, the right students now receive the right support and are beginning to make better progress.

The addition of four new governors, including two parent governors, has strengthened the level of expertise and local knowledge of the governing body. Governors are linked to specific areas of the academy. Their frequent visits to see the academy at work mean that they check for themselves what senior leaders tell them. Governors recognise that they need further training to understand and use assessment information effectively, in order to provide an appropriate level of challenge to the academy's leaders.

### **External support**

The trust monitors the academy's progress rigorously through frequent visits by the trust's senior director for education. There are regular reviews of progress, which accurately identify areas of strength and development. The trust has brokered useful support for the leaders of English, mathematics, science and Year 11 from its local outstanding and good schools. This is helping to sharpen leaders' skills and develop their confidence.