

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



13 January 2017

Mr Keith Howard
Headteacher
St Dunstan's School
Wells Road
Glastonbury
Somerset
BA6 9BY

Dear Mr Howard

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Dunstan's School

Following my visit with Julie Nash, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 7 to 8 December 2016, 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 2016.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2016.

- Improve the culture of safeguarding in the school by ensuring that:
 - governors are appropriately trained so they check the monitoring of the school's safeguarding procedures effectively to be sure that all pupils are safe
 - staff safeguarding training is up to date and recorded accurately.
- Raise outcomes for pupils by checking that all teachers:
 - pose effective questions that check pupils' learning, develop their understanding and extend their thinking
 - follow the school's policy by providing pupils with effective feedback so that they know how well they are doing and understand how to improve their work
 - give pupils, particularly the most able, work that challenges them
 - develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Raise attendance by:
 - improving systems for monitoring absence
 - working effectively with parents and other agencies to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 7 to 8 December 2016

Evidence

- Meetings and reviews of school documentation were conducted with governors, and staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' attainment and progress. Procedures for safeguarding and monitoring attendance were evaluated.
- Inspectors observed pupils throughout the school day. They visited classes and carried out joint observations with senior leaders. They also looked at pupils' written work. Discussions were held both formally, and informally, with pupils. An inspector attended an assembly.

Context

St Dunstan's transferred to the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership as a sponsored school on 1 June 2016. A new local governing body (LGB) was established to replace the previous governing body at the same time. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2016. Since then, the following appointments have been made: a literacy co-ordinator, an Aspire coordinator (to add stretch and challenge within teaching and learning), a pupil premium champion and two new pastoral leaders. In addition, all pupils entitled to the pupil premium have been allocated a staff mentor.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- School leaders have resolved the issues that could be fixed quickly. As a result, almost all areas on the short-term action plan have been completed.
- The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose and is still in draft form. It is not sufficiently 'owned' by those who will be responsible to instigate, follow through or monitor the actions indicated on the plan. Milestones and success criteria are not made sufficiently explicit in order to measure the extent of improvement made.
- The formation of a new LGB and the new sponsorship of the school negated the need for an external review of governance. The LGB has met three times. The members have a good range of talents and experience, which they are using to appropriately support the work of the school. They are asking probing questions and have suitably challenged the work of the school's leaders and managers to drive further improvement.
- Through external review and monitoring by those responsible for governance, important improvements have been made to the safeguarding culture of the school. Their safeguarding of pupils is now more rigorous and this means pupils

are kept safe from harm. Staff and members of the governing body have received appropriate child protection and 'Prevent' training, which is accurately recorded. The recording of pupils' attendance is more robust.

- The school has introduced more effective monitoring and recording systems. These are enabling governors and leaders at all levels to spot where there are areas of underperformance, which they are appropriately dealing with. This is a significant improvement compared with past self-evaluations of the school's work.
- The staff and those responsible for governance have rallied round the headteacher and executive headteacher of the partnership and they agree with and support their ambitious views for the future. Staff are supportive of the changes that have been instigated up to now and are able to suggest their own areas for further development and implement them, where appropriate. A tangible 'can do' culture is being created that is moving the school on.
- There are several staff new to their roles of responsibility. They are keen and desperate to get going with improving the area of the school's provision for which they are responsible. They require more external help and support to guide them and to further improve their leadership skills and effectiveness. All leaders, particularly those who are new, must have the necessary training to acquire the expertise to strongly drive school improvement to ensure that changes are implemented effectively and that standards are raised rapidly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Adults' expectations of what pupils must achieve have risen. Teachers and teaching assistants are working hard to improve pupils' progress and to make the necessary improvements in order that pupils get better lifelong chances and fulfil their potential. The emphasis this term has been on developing literacy across the curriculum, which is showing signs of success. Next term it is planned that numeracy will be targeted. Resources and assessment materials are already well in hand.
- Staff have taken on board the recommendations made during the April 2016 inspection and have embraced the new ways of working and school policies introduced since September 2016. However, the implementation of policies varies. An example of this is DEAR (drop everything and read). Not all tutors make sure that, every day, time is allocated to DEAR. In addition, they do not all ensure that all pupils have the right book to read. This occurs more often in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers are getting to grips with the new assessment system. They are using the information about pupils' performance to plan lessons better, which is diminishing gaps in attainment and helping standards rise. However, there are still too many occasions where, particularly those entitled to the pupil premium along with the most able pupils, are not provided with work that is sufficiently

challenging, which slows their progress and reduces their chances of getting the best grades.

- Training and support for teaching staff are enabling teachers to share resources with other schools within, and outside of, the partnership. Subject leaders are refreshing and improving their expertise by working alongside their peers in other schools. They are also benefiting from attending high-quality training provided by the partnership and some are already undertaking national accreditations in leadership.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Pupils' attendance has improved compared with the same time last year. However, it remains below the national figure. Persistent absence remains too high. The school is working well with families and other agencies to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly; however, there is more to do with parents who do not send their child to school often enough.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and are generally polite and courteous. They form good relationships with each other and are on the whole respectful of authority.
- The levels of pupils' maturity vary considerably. This is most noticeable when they are waiting their turn or have completed their work. The less mature lack resilience. This is demonstrated by fidgeting, going off task and not being able to purposefully occupy themselves without specific direction from an adult.
- Improvements to the school's safeguarding arrangements have enabled pupils to understand better how to keep themselves safe. The new headteacher ensures that when pupils fail to adopt safe practices or flout the school's rules that appropriate action is taken and other agencies are involved as appropriate.

Outcomes for pupils

- Weak teaching over a number of years means that pupils are still catching up in order to get the best grades possible when they leave school.
- In 2016, unvalidated performance information shows that pupils' progress by the end of Year 11 had improved compared with the previous year. Nevertheless, in 2016, the most able pupils did not perform well in mathematics and English language at GCSE level. Those entitled to the pupil premium continued to reach standards lower than those seen nationally.
- Work in pupils' books shows that the school has turned a corner and that more pupils are making better progress than in the past. However, some pupils, in some subjects, are not making the progress that they should. These pupils are mainly boys and/or high achievers and/or entitled to the pupil premium.
- The new assessment system has highlighted where pupils are underachieving

and the school is providing additional support to bring about improvement.

- Because they have not worked hard enough in lessons, or attended school regularly enough, some pupils are encouraged to attend lunchtime and after-school catch-up clubs. In the main, this is to complete coursework. In the short-term this is helpful, and demonstrates the commitment of staff. However, it means that other activities which could provide greater educational enrichment are sacrificed.
- Given its size, the school is rightly proud of its sporting achievements. Pupils get to challenge themselves by comparing their skills levels with others, for example as part of the football team. This raises pupils' understanding of what levels their sporting rival competitors are working at. They do not have the same level of understanding about their academic aspirations.

External support

- There has been significant financial investment in buildings and resources since the school joined the partnership. The security and attractiveness of the site has been considerably improved. More improvements are in the pipeline.
- Support for subject leaders has enabled them to improve their expertise and develop good relationships with subject leaders in other schools. It has enabled them to share best practice and to have subject specialist discussions that have already started to lead to improvements in the quality of the curriculum provided.
- More support is needed for those with new roles and responsibilities at senior and middle leadership levels to ensure swift improvement to raise standards and accelerate pupils' achievement.