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30 January 2018

Miss Alex Petrie
Interim Principal
Judgemeadow Community College
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Leicestershire
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Dear Miss Petrie

Special measures monitoring inspection of Judgemeadow Community College

Following my visit with Clare Considine and Stephen Long, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 11 and 12 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Please pass on my thanks to all those who helped during the inspection and for the time they 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 December 2016. 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

the school's improvement plans are fit for purpose

the school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently address the serious weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements by:
 - ensuring that all leaders responsible for safeguarding, including governors, know, understand and carry out their duties in line with statutory guidance
 - keeping accurate records of all safeguarding concerns
 - monitoring all concerns raised until pupils' safety and well-being are assured
 - implementing safer recruitment practices more rigorously
 - monitoring and analysing bullying incidents, especially by type, and acting effectively upon the findings
 - adopting more rigorous approaches to checking pupils' attendance at any off-site provision.
- Accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils, especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - analysing the impact of support strategies more carefully and developing or sustaining those which are effective
 - analysing the progress of each pupil group more sharply, so that pupils' varying needs can be supported more effectively
 - developing further the quality of teaching in mathematics
 - providing regular and effective support for the least able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers help pupils to understand how to improve their work and make next steps in their progress
 - minimising the frequency of disruptions to pupils' learning in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers use the information about pupils' needs effectively so that pupils are provided with sufficient challenge, especially for the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teachers learn from best practice in the school and elsewhere.
- Improve pupils' personal development behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving pupils' attitudes towards each other and towards those who may be different to themselves
 - developing pupils' understanding about the different kinds of threats to their safety
 - ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils come to school more regularly

- ensuring that pupils are punctual to school and lessons
- improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons and especially during unstructured times.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing all leadership roles and responsibilities to ensure that the work leaders do is effective
 - acting upon the recommendations from the recent review of the school's pupil premium provision
 - strengthening and embedding effective anti-bullying strategies across the school
 - developing the pastoral curriculum further to help pupils understand how to keep safe and develop sound moral values and social skills, so that they can be an asset to modern British society
 - ensuring that the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is strengthened
 - strengthening the role of governance, so that school leaders are effectively held to account and supported.

An external review of governance 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 January 2018

Evidence

Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, and representatives of the academy trust that is supporting the school. They also met with a group of staff and spoke informally with other staff during the course of the visit. Inspectors met with members of the interim executive board and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. They also met groups of pupils from both key stages. They observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived in the morning, at breaktime, at lunchtime and between lessons.

Inspectors visited 36 lessons, some with a senior leader, and discussed the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning observed. During these visits, inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors also observed a morning tutorial period, an assembly and a staff training session.

A number of documents were scrutinised, including records in relation to pupils' behaviour and attendance, their attainment and progress, and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The school's improvement plans and self-evaluation records were considered. Inspectors also evaluated the quality of pupils' learning and progress in a sample of pupils' workbooks in a range of subjects and different year groups.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been considerable changes to staffing, particularly among the leadership team. One vice-principal has left the school and one has relinquished his leadership responsibilities. The acting vice-principal now has this role permanently and has taken responsibility for the area of 'holistic development'. Another vice-principal has been appointed to the school, with responsibility for 'academic excellence'. This includes responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment, the curriculum and standards. Two assistant principals have left the school and a further two have relinquished their leadership responsibilities. Two new assistant principals have joined the school. In addition, two team-leader posts have been created and internal appointments have been made, one each to the 'academic excellence' and 'holistic development' teams.

The school has appointed new heads of department for humanities and science, who took up their posts in September 2017 and January 2018, respectively. During the course of the summer and autumn terms in 2017, leaders appointed five assistant heads of year.

In addition, 14 teachers and nine non-teaching members of staff have left the

school. They have been replaced by 12 new teachers and 16 non-teaching members of staff.

The interim executive board, which was formed following the inspection in December 2016, remains in place. Processes to enable the school to join the Lionheart Academies Trust are ongoing but not yet finalised.

At the time of the monitoring inspection, you were temporarily absent from school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Pupils, staff and members of the interim executive board have full confidence in your leadership. This confidence is shared by leaders from the academy trust that is supporting the school. All agree that the improvements made following the inspection in December 2016 have been strengthened since your appointment as interim principal in June 2017. You are very well supported by the two vice-principals and other members of the senior leadership team. The school has a clear vision for improvement, and all are committed to supporting you to realise this vision and achieve your aims.

The interim executive board (IEB) continues to be very effective. The chair of the IEB has considerable skill and strength in holding leaders to account. Members of the board are skilled and highly knowledgeable. They have a clear and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this to provide effective challenge and support. Clear plans are in place for the future.

Just prior to the last monitoring inspection, you had completed the restructuring of the senior leadership team. Two clear strands of school leadership are now working in collaboration in the two areas of 'holistic development' and 'academic excellence'. The former focuses on all aspects of pupils' care, welfare, safeguarding, behaviour and support. The 'academic excellence' team focuses on quality and standards in relation to the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' learning and their progress. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is also much clearer accountability at all levels in the school. Recent appointments to the leadership team have further strengthened its capacity and effectiveness.

The last monitoring inspection recognised the success of the considerable work swiftly undertaken to ensure that safeguarding was effective. This work has continued and systems have been strengthened further. Records are detailed and of high quality. These support the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead is well supported by a very able safeguarding team. All are tenacious in following up referrals, escalating concerns to higher levels where necessary. Leaders have ensured that new staff are trained to maintain the strengths in safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders have also ensured that all staff are kept up to date with developments in safeguarding arrangements, for

example in relation to risks pertinent to the local area. Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding to protect and support all pupils. Staff recognise and understand their responsibilities within their safeguarding duties. Furthermore, a desire to support and guide pupils in all aspects of their school life is clearly communicated to pupils. For example, staff display a red heart on their classroom and office doors, indicating to pupils that they are available and prepared to listen to and support them when they have problems or worries. Pupils feel that staff care about their safety and well-being.

Following the full inspection in December 2016, a key priority was to tackle concerns about bullying in the school. Again, leaders took quick action by introducing a new system for referring and monitoring these concerns. Since the last monitoring inspection staff have worked actively to improve anti-bullying strategies. An anti-bullying leader has been appointed and has led developments in all areas of the school. A team of 15 pupils have been appointed as anti-bullying ambassadors to support staff in promoting the anti-bullying message and supporting other pupils where potential concerns may arise. The emphasis is on prevention and support and there is a clear understanding, throughout the school, that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that bullying is now rare. They reported that when incidents do occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils said that the school is friendly and welcoming. Older pupils, in particular, recognise the improvements that have been made. Although the picture is now positive, leaders are not complacent and are keen to maintain focus on this important aspect of the school's work.

The personal development curriculum has been redesigned. It now provides valuable and effective support to develop and promote pupils' understanding of diversity and tolerance. It is well led and managed, and there is a consistent approach to its delivery. All pupils benefit equally. Leaders have developed a coordinated approach, for example by ensuring that the themes and messages within personal development lessons are reflected in different school activities such as assemblies and tutor periods. Fundamental British values are threaded through the curriculum. Pupils are increasingly confident to discuss diversity. They noted that there is a greater understanding and tolerance among pupils but said that some negative attitudes remain, particularly around homophobia. Leaders are aware of this and plans are in place to promote further aspects of diversity and support pupils to develop their understanding.

Further work has been undertaken to improve assessment practices throughout the school. Leaders have introduced more frequent assessment points. Half-termly assessments now provide regular and up-to-date information about pupils' progress. This allows leaders to identify which pupils are falling behind and to intervene where necessary. Although there is now a more accurate picture of pupils' attainment and progress, leaders are aware that assessment information is not always used effectively in teaching provision. They intend to take further action to ensure consistency.

The last monitoring inspection noted that the leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was still in need of significant improvement. Leaders have continued to support work in this area and some improvements are evident. Greater consideration is now given to pupils' views about how their needs should be met. For example, leaders have undertaken learning walks with pupils to evaluate the accessibility of the school site. There is an increased understanding of the need to evaluate pupils' progress. Leaders are beginning to identify patterns in pupils' progress and attendance. There remains, however, a lack of strategic approach for the provision throughout the school. This continues to be a key priority.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding was undertaken shortly before the inspection in December 2016. In order to act on the recommendations of the review, considerable work was required to strengthen assessment practice and other areas of weakness in the school. At the time of the last monitoring inspection, leaders had begun to tackle these issues. Since then, leaders have appointed a team leader, working within both the 'holistic' and 'academic excellence' teams to lead improvements in this vital aspect of the school's work. She is supported by two 'pupil premium champions' who lead on strategies to support pupils and to extend their experiences. Their work is based on local research. For example, they have sought pupils' views and have analysed information about pupils' performance to help them decide on the strategies they use to improve experiences and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This work is in its early stages and it is too soon to evaluate its impact. Clear plans are in place for further developments and senior leaders closely monitor this work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent between subjects and year groups. There are pockets of strong practice. Here, teachers use their knowledge about what pupils can do to plan activities which meet their needs and provide suitable challenge and support. Some teachers use questioning effectively to engage pupils and to extend and develop their understanding. Inspectors noted good subject knowledge in the lessons they observed.

Other practice is weaker. Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to plan activities that match pupils' different abilities. This means that the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the least able pupils are not effectively supported. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Too often, activities do not challenge pupils, particularly in mathematics, where pupils said they often find their work too easy. The Lionheart Academies Trust has been providing support to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and some improvements are evident. This remains a priority.

At the last monitoring inspection, it was noted that teachers did not provide pupils with regular and effective feedback to support their learning. Again, there are

variations in this aspect of teaching because the school's 'effective feedback' policy is not routinely applied. Pupils are not consistently clear about what they need to do to improve their work. For example, they do not always understand what they need to do to meet the criteria to achieve their target grades.

Leaders have provided training for teaching assistants to help them to improve their practice when supporting pupils in mainstream classes. Teachers have also received training to develop their understanding of how to deploy teaching assistants effectively in lessons. Weaknesses in the in-class support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were identified at the last monitoring inspection. There have been some improvements but weaknesses remain.

The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, following the appointment of the 'academic excellence' vice-principal in September 2017. He has a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work and is frank and honest in his self-evaluation. He has implemented clear plans to improve teachers' practice throughout the school. These include a training programme for staff, who now receive regular, focused training to develop their skills in specific areas needing of improvement. Staff are extremely positive about the impact that this provision is having on their practice. They are keen to improve. Currently, the training programme targets whole-staff needs but plans are in place to develop a more bespoke programme as practice improves across the school.

Although there has been considerable activity, these new approaches have not yet had time to have a significant impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. Leaders are aware of the need for consistent use of these strategies to ensure that improvements are long term and sustainable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Following the previous full inspection, leaders introduced an interim behaviour policy. This follows a clear and simple system of warnings and consequences. Leaders have further developed the policy to incorporate greater emphasis on recognising positive behaviour. This uses a 'pyramid of awesome', where pupils can earn rewards through a variety of different means. The approach extends beyond the classroom and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are encouraged to identify pupils who deserve recognition for their good behaviour. Staff and pupils reported that the improved behaviour noted at the last monitoring inspection has been maintained and that behaviour at social times has improved. Leaders monitor and track behaviour referrals carefully and the number of incidents has reduced. Low-level disruption, however, still exists in some lessons, particularly where teaching is weaker. Not all staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.

Leaders have placed considerable emphasis on promoting leadership roles among pupils. For example, different pupils take responsibility for a range of aspects of

school improvement. Pupils appreciate these opportunities.

Tutors have taken greater responsibility for improving pupils' attendance. They use detailed information about absences to support and challenge pupils, intervening where necessary. For example, they hold one-to-one discussions with pupils whose attendance begins to fall. They support pupils to identify the reasons for absence and help them to understand the importance of regular attendance. This has reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Systems to monitor the attendance of pupils at off-site, alternative provision are robust. Whole-school attendance improved in the autumn term 2017. However, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, is below the relevant national average. Improving the attendance of these groups of pupils remains a priority.

At the time of the last monitoring inspection, pupils' punctuality in the morning had improved but their punctuality to lessons during the day was a concern. Leaders have clearly communicated their high expectations of punctuality at all times by including this within the behaviour policy. They have also helped pupils to meet their expectations by amending the timings of the school day to allow for movement time between lessons. Leaders now describe pupils' punctuality as good and inspectors noted that during the monitoring inspection the vast majority of lessons began promptly.

Outcomes for pupils

At the time of the last monitoring inspection, leaders were predicting improved achievement for pupils in Year 11 taking their examinations in 2017. These expectations were realised and in 2017 standards improved. Overall progress for all pupils was in line with the national average. Disadvantaged pupils' progress was also broadly average. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, made particularly strong progress in English and humanities subjects. However, pupils made less progress in mathematics than in other subjects. Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils made considerably less progress than other pupils nationally in mathematics.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made less progress, in a range of subjects, than other pupils nationally, and less progress than other pupils in the school. Boys also made less progress than girls in the school.

Leaders are aware of the need to raise the achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and boys. Clear plans are in place to support improvements and staff are fully aware of the expectation to meet the needs of these groups of pupils in their daily provision.

External support

Since the last monitoring inspection, the Lionheart Academies Trust has continued to provide high-quality support to leaders and staff throughout the school. There is a strong sense of collaboration between the trust and the school. Staff at all levels appreciate the support and challenge that the trust has provided.

The local authority has provided effective support through monitoring visits and work to improve teaching, learning and assessment. For example, it has provided funding to secure additional support from the Lionheart Academies Trust to the mathematics department. A consultant has supported work to improve the personal development curriculum.