

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 January 2019

Mr Gary Carlile
Principal
Skegness Academy
Burgh Road
Skegness
Lincolnshire
PE25 2QH

Dear Mr Carlile

Special measures monitoring inspection of Skegness Academy

Following my visit with Rachel Tordoff, Her Majesty's Inspector and John Edwards, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 11–12 December 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 May 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.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive

officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that all leaders have the skills required to play an effective role in accelerating school improvement
 - ensuring that the use of the pupil premium funding is monitored efficiently and that it addresses the barriers to learning experienced by all eligible pupils
 - ensuring that the use of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is monitored efficiently and that it helps all eligible pupils to catch up with their peers
 - ensuring that the use of the funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is monitored efficiently and that it supports the learning needs of these pupils effectively
 - ensuring that the curriculum prepares pupils for their next stage in their education
 - ensuring that those responsible for governance have effective oversight of the impact of external government funding, including the pupil premium
 - ensuring that those responsible for governance have effective oversight and hold leaders to account to ensure that the school improves rapidly
 - ensuring that those responsible for governance continue to secure high-quality, intensive external support for the school and that this support is monitored closely to ensure that it has impact for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching quality
 - ensuring that pupils' literacy and numeracy needs are met.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - ensuring that an effective behaviour policy is in place, is well understood by all staff and is applied consistently
 - eradicating the incidents of poor behaviour, particularly in lessons
 - reducing the number of pupils excluded from school
 - ensuring that all pupils and groups of pupils attend school at rates similar to national averages, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 3 and key stage 4 improve dramatically
 - pupils in the current Year 9 receive intensive support, in order that they have the skills required to study at key stage 4

- disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils with the same starting points
 - pupils with SEND make the progress that their starting points indicate they should
 - the high proportion of pupils who enter school with attainment that is significantly below the national average are supported effectively to develop the literacy and numeracy skills needed to catch up
 - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the progress that they should.
- Improve the 16 to 19 provision by ensuring that:
- the variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is addressed
 - students attend more regularly
 - students are helped to catch up, so that they achieve as well as their starting points would indicate that they should
 - students receive intensive support, in order to develop the skills required for studying at this level effectively.

Ofsted recommends that an external review of governance is carried out, in order to improve this aspect of the school.

Ofsted recommends that an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding is carried out, in order to improve this aspect of the school.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 to 12 December 2018

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, deputy principals, associate deputy principal, assistant principals, special educational needs coordinator and other staff. Further meetings were held with the chief executive officer, the director of education, secondary and an education adviser from the Greenwood Academies Trust. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to some parents and carers. Inspectors spoke formally with three groups of pupils, including the head boy and girl, and informally with others at break and lunchtimes.

Context

Fifteen members of the staff left the school at the end of the summer term in 2018. An associate deputy principal has been appointed to the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the previous visit, the pace of improvement has quickened. In the wake of that visit, senior leaders drew up individual action plans to show how they would respond to its findings. They have worked with colleagues from the trust to ensure that these plans are realistic and fit for purpose and enable improvements to be measured. The school's development plan now contains appropriate milestones so that trustees can hold leaders to account for their progress against these.

The appointment of an associate deputy principal, as well as three temporary secondments to the leadership team, has added capacity to bring about the necessary improvements more rapidly. Staff say that there is greater clarity about the roles of the senior leaders and that communication has improved. Leaders at all levels are developing their skills through external leadership courses, in-house training and opportunities in the trust. Leaders who are new in post have worked alongside established leaders and have a keen understanding of what is required of them, and the pace at which improvements need to be made. Middle leaders are now more fully involved in quality-assuring the work of teachers in their faculties. This is a development since the previous visit.

Leaders have put in place a coherent plan to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across all faculties, looking, for example, at how well all teachers meet the teachers' standards. Following this, they identified the precise support that individual staff need to improve their practice and have ensured that staff have been able to access courses and support that meet their needs. Colleagues have the opportunity to observe each other and reflect on and develop their practice. Since the previous visit, there has been an increased focus on the 'non-negotiable'

elements ('every lesson, every day') that leaders expect to see in place. Leaders have communicated these in such a way that staff understand them clearly, and are increasingly able to build them into their daily practice. As a result, these are becoming more routine and are leading to improvements. There are encouraging signs that leaders are successfully eradicating inadequate teaching.

Leaders have made further changes to the curriculum. Some of these decisions reflect staffing difficulties. For example, pupils in the current Year 11 are no longer able to study French and are instead taking a course in health and fitness. This decision was taken part way through the autumn term and, for some Year 11 pupils, proved a little unsettling. There is some way to go to ensure that all pupils are entered on the right courses and that all aspects of the curriculum are consistently well delivered. Leaders have decided that GCSE courses will begin in Year 9. It is too soon to judge whether this has been a successful move.

The trust has restructured its offer of support and now has additional capacity to support and challenge leaders. The termly performance reviews look in detail at the work of the school and provide trustees with accurate information about the school's effectiveness. Through these reviews, trustees are able to challenge leaders to make further improvements. The appointment of an additional secondary adviser at the trust means that there is more support in place than was previously the case. Through this support, the trust has brokered a review of the English department, for example, that has led to improvements in this department. Representatives from the trust work alongside leaders on an ongoing basis to develop their skills and check the effectiveness of the action that leaders take.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

An increasing proportion of staff understand leaders' expectations of them and are applying them in their daily teaching. This is leading, increasingly, to well-structured learning and routines becoming embedded. Less learning time is lost because teachers have higher expectations and ensure, increasingly, that lessons get off to a good start. Teachers now routinely meet pupils at the door when lessons begin and are more likely to challenge poor behaviour in class. Pupils are beginning to respond to these raised expectations and are increasingly ready to start learning promptly.

The introduction of a new assessment system in key stage 3 is having a marked improvement in some areas. For example, in English, teachers are regularly setting work that takes account of the 'key performance indicators' for each stage of pupils' learning. The routine, effective use of assessment, alongside helpful feedback, is leading to improvements.

However, while improving, there are areas where practice is less successful. There are too many instances when teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently and pupils complete work that requires little intellectual effort. Leaders have made it clear that teachers should avoid setting these 'low-level tasks', but there are still

times when pupils are waiting to learn or doing tasks that are beneath their ability level.

There are increasing examples of staff from different departments correcting pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation. Likewise, the use of key words is becoming more consistent in different subjects and is helping pupils to improve their basic literacy. These strategies are not used successfully in all classes, however. There are times when teachers do not check that pupils understand the meaning of key terms, and misconceptions arise. Teachers are increasingly requiring longer written answers from pupils. On occasion, the purpose of these is not clear and pupils do not understand the success criteria.

The focus on questioning, through professional development, has led to some teachers using questioning carefully to challenge pupils, test their understanding and extend their learning. However, too often, questioning checks that pupils are able to recall factual information but fails to go beyond that.

The increased opportunities to work together mean that staff assess pupils' work more accurately and use this information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. There is training planned to ensure that all teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress accurately.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the previous visit, there have been marked improvements in behaviour around the school. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are more orderly, with less boisterous behaviour and poor language than were noted at the previous visit. At the end of breaktime and lunchtime, pupils move sensibly off to class and, for the most part, enter classes ready to learn. Pupils, especially older ones, told inspectors that behaviour is improving because teachers are applying the behaviour policy with increasing consistency. Pupils, in turn, are responding to the higher expectations being placed on them. They understand the sanctions in place for poor behaviour. There are fewer incidents of pupils being taken out of class for poor behaviour. Those who spoke with inspectors understood the reasons for the sanctions being applied and were able to reflect on their behaviour. Pupils in the 'turning point' rooms are given meaningful work to do and, for the most part, get on with it sensibly. Likewise, there are fewer pupils leaving class without reason.

Pupils told inspectors that teachers would take swift action in response to incidents of bullying. They have a mature understanding of why it is important to respect difference and are confident that, for example, instances of homophobic or racist language would not be tolerated. Inspectors saw examples of how the school is increasingly successful in promoting pupils' personal development through themed days, assemblies and tutor time. Pupils spoke enthusiastically, for example, about a recent workshop that developed their personal and leadership skills. However, some pupils who spoke with inspectors said they would like more opportunities to learn

'about life'. Inspectors spoke with a few parents of pupils who had faced particular challenges. These parents stated that they had received effective support from the school.

Leaders' efforts to promote a positive school culture are increasingly successful. This was evident in the activities taking place during the inspection, such as the carol concert and pantomime. Also, the 'academy pledge' that is aimed at ensuring that all pupils – regardless of their background – have equal opportunities to take part in a range of cultural and social activities is having a positive impact.

Pupils are beginning to take greater pride in their work. Inspectors saw many examples of work that was neatly presented. While the majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors feel that their school is improving, some still struggle to say what it is about their school that makes them proud.

Pupils' overall attendance is improving, although provisional information for 2017/18 suggests that it will remain below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, while also reducing, remains a significant barrier to improving the outcomes for these pupils. The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school is likely to remain above the national average. Leaders attribute a rise in exclusions in the last academic year to the introduction of the new behaviour policy, with some pupils struggling to adapt to the increased expectations and stricter application of the policy.

Outcomes for pupils

Provisional information suggests that, in 2018, pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4 remain well below national averages. A legacy of poor teaching, compounded by changes to staffing and leadership and an inappropriate curriculum, left pupils ill prepared for the rigours of GCSE examinations and with too many gaps in their knowledge and understanding. According to the provisional results, the progress of the most able pupils improved only marginally on the previous year, while the progress of pupils of middle ability, likewise, did not improve significantly. Compared to their counterparts in 2017, the least able pupils made less progress. Provisional information for mathematics, however, shows some improvement to the progress that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have made.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, with improving teaching, pupils are beginning to make more secure progress than previously. This is especially the case when teaching is matched to pupils' needs and builds carefully on what they know and can do. Successful examples of this were seen in English, for example, where the careful build-up of skills enabled pupils to write fluently, at length and with increasing mastery.

Improved teaching and provision for pupils with SEND are making a difference to

these pupils' progress. The improved use of additional adults means that pupils are becoming less reliant on the support of these adults and increasingly willing to complete work themselves.

External support

Following the previous inspection, leaders have made further links with local schools and with the local authority, for example to improve the provision for pupils with challenging behaviour. Such links are enabling the school to be increasingly outward-looking, to be open to new ideas and influences and to develop effective partnerships. The school continues to benefit from its involvement in the Transforming Schools Pilot Project.