

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231

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17 October 2019

Mr Simon Wood  
Executive Headteacher  
Copperfield Academy  
Dover Road East  
Northfleet  
Gravesend  
Kent DA11 0RB

Dear Mr Wood

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Copperfield Academy**

Following my visit with Stephanie Scutter, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 8–9 October 2019, 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 January 2019. 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.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the intervention board, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer or equivalent of REAch2 Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2019.**

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management of key stages 1 and 2 by:
  - ensuring that effective monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment impacts rapidly and positively on pupils' progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that the curriculum is broad, balanced and implemented well so that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding consistently well across all subjects
  - improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
  - ensuring that effective support and challenge are provided by both the trust and IB
  - improving the impact that pupil premium spending has so that disadvantaged pupils overcome their barriers to learning and make stronger progress.
- Improve pupils' progress across the school by:
  - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations so that pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, make strong and sustained progress towards reaching age-related expectations, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that teaching strengthens pupils' understanding and correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar so that their writing improves
  - making sure that teachers use assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs, particularly for those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils
  - improving the additional support provided for pupils with SEND.
- Improve behaviour by:
  - reducing the remaining instances of bullying and the use of derogatory language, particularly racist and homophobic insults
  - further reducing low-level disruption in lessons.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school'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 8 October 2019 to 9 October 2019.**

### **Evidence**

Together with senior leaders, inspectors made short lesson visits to look at pupils' learning and behaviour. Inspectors met with you, senior leaders and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with the director of excellence and standards and the chief operating officer of the REAch2 Academy Trust, who is also the chair of the intervention board. The lead inspector met formally with a group of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 and heard pupils read. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. They met with a group of staff and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised the school's documents, including the transformation plan and records relating to safeguarding. The single central record was checked.

### **Context**

This was the second monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in January 2019. The first monitoring visit took place in May 2019. Since the first monitoring visit, nine new teachers have been appointed who started at the school in September 2019. The acting deputy headteacher is now the substantive deputy headteacher. The assistant headteacher is currently acting deputy headteacher. The school has two part-time unqualified teachers. A full-time site manager has been appointed. The nursery is now offering full-time provision. There have been significant changes to the structure of REAch2 Academy Trust.

### **The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection**

In the summer term, leaders and teachers worked together to overhaul the curriculum. They have carefully planned how subjects should be sequenced to enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills progressively. Leaders have recently employed specialist art, music and modern foreign language teachers to strengthen the teaching in these subjects. As a result, Year 1 pupils are beginning to develop techniques in shading, for example, and in Year 5 pupils are refining these techniques using pastels to create movement and texture. Inspectors saw some impressive examples of pupils' artwork emerging in books and around the school.

Though now carefully planned, the full curriculum is not yet embedded in teaching across the school. Further improvements are needed to ensure that teachers routinely assess how well pupils are doing in lessons, and to ensure that learning is well-matched to pupils' needs. Leaders are rightly making this a priority. They are not complacent and actions to bring about improvements are continuing, drawing on the strengths now evident in the school to model their high expectations.

Senior leaders are ensuring that new subject leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are taking action to equip these new leaders with the subject knowledge and the expertise needed to fulfil their roles effectively. However, it is too early to see the impact of their work.

Leaders recognise that pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are not yet building securely on the good start with reading that they make in early years. Strategies are being developed to identify pupils falling behind and help them catch up, but the impact of this work is limited by the need for staff development in the teaching of phonics.

Pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are enjoying the class books they are reading to support their learning but still lack a wider appreciation of different books and authors. Teachers are not yet routinely reading to pupils. Leaders recognise that the profile of reading needs to be raised across these two key stages to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading, with much remaining to be done in this area.

Leaders are making it a priority to focus on how well teaching meets the needs of pupils with SEND. The inclusion lead's checks on the quality of support being provided for these pupils is increasingly informing training for staff. As a result, the provision these pupils receive is improving steadily.

Developments in the personal, social, health and economic curriculum are supporting leaders' clear ambition to eradicate any derogatory negative attitudes among pupils. For example, pupils are being helped to develop their own moral compass through the coverage of issues such as truthfulness, self-control, fairness and justice. Leaders have a firm ambition that pupils should be receiving a broad range of experiences beyond the classroom. For example, during the inspection three year groups attended the primary proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Many pupils excitedly told inspectors that this was their first visit to London. Other pupils are eagerly anticipating the upcoming visit to the O2 arena to take part in Young Voices. Year 6 pupils go on a residential trip to France and plans are in place for Year 1 pupils to 'sleep under the stars' on the school site.

Leaders' work to improve behaviour continues to generate success. Pupils report that bullying is significantly reducing, and parents spoken to and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree. The school's behaviour records show that the number of reported incidents of poor behaviour have significantly reduced from the same period last year. The school's rigorous approach to tackling poor attendance is showing some signs of improvement, although pupils' absence figures remain above the national average.

Leaders recognise the risks to pupils online and are ensuring that pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage their safety online. Leaders are acutely aware of older pupils' concerns about online bullying that takes place outside

of school, and how it affects them. They are sensibly considering how to tackle this issue sensitively and effectively with parents.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The executive headteacher, members of the trust and the intervention board continue to lead decisively. The improvements noted during the monitoring inspection clearly show the developing impact of their response to the section 5 report. Leaders have been successful in recruiting the high number of new teachers needed at the start of this term and now aim to start building a cohesive and stable staffing team. There is a shared sense of purpose and a developing drive to improve standards.

The executive headteacher is being well supported by the leadership team and the intervention board. Together, they are making an impressive start to tackling weaknesses identified in the section 5 inspection. The comprehensive 'transformation plan' is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure that actions taken contribute to improvement. Leaders show determination to create an ambitious and inclusive culture within the school.

The intervention board are sensibly considering their future role as the school improves and are thoughtfully putting in place plans to ensure that strong governance is maintained.

The intervention board are now clear about how the funding is being used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and have put in place a detailed action plan. They are closely tracking the progress of this group of pupils, working with school leaders to identify and understand barriers to pupils' learning. It is too soon to measure the impact of their work, and outcomes for this group of pupils remained low in the most recent national assessments.

Leaders are fostering positive relationships with staff. Leaders are taking a strategic approach, recognising the pressures of workload on staff and balancing these effectively to ensure that improvements are put into effect. Teachers and support staff said how much they feel the culture of the school is improving, with many agreeing that, 'The school is unrecognisable from what it was a year ago.' Staff feel that leaders value their views and appreciate the high-quality professional development they are receiving.

All parents spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about the many changes that have taken place since the section 5 inspection. They single out the executive headteacher for praise, saying that he is bringing a long-needed sense of stability to the school and raising expectations in all areas of school life.

Systems and processes to keep pupils safe in school are being maintained and improved on since the section 5 inspection. Staff are receiving appropriate training on all aspects of safeguarding. Leaders have successfully implemented an electronic system for recording concerns, although this is yet to be rolled out more widely across the school. Leaders are rightly being relentless in their work to follow up the

high number of pupils who are missing in education. The single central record continues to be well maintained. The trust sensibly continues to undertake regular safeguarding audits, and all actions that arise are swiftly followed up.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Leaders have successfully recruited new teachers to the school and are building an increasingly effective teaching team. Teachers are being held firmly to account for improvements in their work.
- Leaders are improving communication both within school and with the local community. Parents and staff praise the 'transformative' changes that they say are being made.
- Leaders are continuing an effective focus on improving the identification and assessment of pupils with SEND, to ensure that these pupils receive the help they need. The school's inclusive culture means that this group of pupils are enjoying the same developing curriculum as their peers and are being supported increasingly well in lessons.
- Leaders are developing an effective approach to behaviour which is understood by the whole school community. As a result, incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are reducing.
- Leaders' keen focus on developing the curriculum is ensuring that this work is being made the priority it needs to be. The developing curriculum plans reflect leaders' clear thinking about how they wish to see pupils' learning sequenced over time. Leaders recognise that further work is necessary to ensure that these plans are implemented consistently across all subjects and throughout the school.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Staff have differing levels of expertise in the teaching of early reading. Leaders need to ensure that all staff, including those who are new to the school, are confident in the teaching of phonics. This is to ensure that all pupils can get off to the best possible start in their reading.
- Pupils in key stage 1 and 2 do not read widely or often. Leaders need to raise the profile of reading in these key stages so that pupils' love of reading is enhanced.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment effectively to help pupils remember long term the content they have been taught. Teachers need to ensure that they check pupils' understanding systematically, and that they identify misconceptions accurately and swiftly before moving learning on.
- Leaders need to make sure they continue to strengthen the programme for professional development so that subject leaders' work has a strongly positive impact on pupils' learning.

## **External support**

The trust provides an external moderator to check the accuracy of assessment in writing. The trust has appointed two external educational consultants to work with the school to develop leadership and reading.