

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



3 March 2020

Mr Simon Wood  
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 Kirstine Boon, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 February 2020, 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 third 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, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer 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 third monitoring inspection on 11 to 12 February 2020**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your senior leaders and subject leaders. Together with senior leaders, inspectors made short lesson visits to look at pupils' learning and behaviour. 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 spoke to 10 pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 about their views of the school and observed three pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to an adult. Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day on both days of the inspection. Inspectors scrutinised the school's documents including curriculum programmes of study, the school's transformation plan and the work of the intervention board in monitoring the school. Inspectors examined the school's single central record of background checks on adults working in the school and checked procedures in the school to keep pupils safe.

### **Context**

This was the third monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in January 2019. Since the second monitoring visit, four teachers have left the school and five teachers have been appointed. A new subject leader for mathematics and an interim deputy headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning took up their roles in January 2020. REAch2 Academy Trust continues to support the school and the intervention board remains in place.

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

Leaders are ensuring that reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Reading throughout the school and in all subjects is supported and encouraged. Staff who teach phonics have received appropriate training and are now more confidently teaching pupils the skills needed to help them read. This starts in Nursery and Reception, where pupils are continuing to get off to a great start with their reading. Pupils' progress is being carefully monitored and any pupils who need support are being helped to catch up. Pupils are now being provided with books which help them practise the particular sounds they are learning. Leaders have developed an attractive library area and are working successfully with the local community to raise money to buy new books. In classrooms, book areas have been revamped and teachers are using high-quality texts to enhance the topics which pupils are learning about. The profile of reading is being raised, for example where classroom environments are being developed to reflect the book and topic being studied. A classroom has been turned into a 'cave' linked to the Stone Age topic and another has been transformed into the panelled dining room of the Titanic, incorporating chandeliers, candelabras and covered 'dining chairs', for example. Pupils are

beginning to develop their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge more reliably. This is having a positive impact on the many opportunities they are given to write. Consequently, pupils are becoming inspired and talk with great enjoyment and knowledge about the different books they are reading. They are rightly proud of the new words they are learning and their increasingly assured writing. Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that the focus on reading remains high and the weakest readers are supported so that no pupil 'slips through the net'.

Leaders recognise that, until recently, weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum remained. Since January 2020, with the new mathematics leader in post, leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching. This is designed to incorporate opportunities for pupils to further develop and their apply mathematical skills. Helpfully, at the same time, leaders are continuing with their work to ensure that all teachers, including support staff, have the skills and knowledge to teach mathematics with confidence. A more consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics is emerging as a result. Mathematics planning now shows sensible sequencing and progression. However, work needs to continue to ensure that the new approach is meeting the needs of all pupils. This includes those who may lack confidence or have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and need to catch up.

Leaders are consolidating their earlier success in improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The needs of pupils with SEND who join the school are now being promptly identified. The support and care being put in place helps them to thrive and begin to succeed. The pastoral team, inclusion team, teachers and leaders are all working well together for the benefit of this group of pupils.

The curriculum is continuing to develop and improve. Senior leaders and subject leaders are carefully planning how pupils' learning should be sequenced, to ensure that pupils build their knowledge and skills progressively. For instance, during the inspection Year 4 pupils were applying their scientific knowledge to an experiment to find out which solids dissolve in water. Leaders are now turning their attention to preparing more detailed schemes of work for computing and design and technology. The work of the specialist music, art and modern foreign language teachers is contributing well to an increasingly effective curriculum. For instance, children in Reception were impressively able to sing and act out a song from 'The Sound of Music'. In art, pupils were learning about the drawings of Henry Moore in the Second World War. Work is now underway to ensure that assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is further strengthened.

Leaders are successfully improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A well-considered and interesting enrichment programme is being implemented. Leaders are determined that the curriculum gives pupils experience of the wider world. A visit is planned to a local police college, so pupils can learn about the diverse roles of policing, for example. Leaders are putting in place opportunities to help pupils consider future career interests. The school includes pupils from a

wide range of different cultures. These are celebrated and valued. During the inspection, visitors worked with Year 6 to enhance their understanding of the Second World War. Pupils have recently taken part in Young Voices at the O2. Pupils enjoy the many sports they take part in. At playtimes pupils participate in organised physical activities such as the popular 'four-square' game. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their physical education lessons and new after-school sports clubs such as badminton.

Leaders' work to improve behaviour is continuing with great success. There has been a significant drop in the number of incidents of poor behaviour recorded. Pupils whose behaviour may be more challenging are now receiving a personalised plan. Because of the careful thought and structure that has been put in place, their behaviour is improving. The school has had no fixed-term or permanent exclusions this year. Incidents of racism or homophobic bullying have all but been eradicated. The school's values are being reinforced through assemblies and the high expectations for behaviour. This is resulting in increasingly calm learning environment, good natured and happy social times and high levels of respect across the school.

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

The executive headteacher, members of the REAch2 Academy Trust and the intervention board continue to lead the school with a strong vision. Leaders have acted quickly and decisively since the last monitoring visit to address the previously identified weaknesses in reading. Leaders are continuing to support staff to improve their practice with focused professional development. They are developing subject leaders in their roles, so they can be even better placed to successfully lead their areas of responsibility. Leaders and staff are united in their determination to make the school better for its pupils.

The transformation plan continues to be regularly reviewed and monitored by leaders, the intervention board and the trust, to ensure that actions taken are having the intended impact. Careful thought is now being given to the future governance of the school to ensure that the evident high expectations and much-needed stability are maintained.

The intervention board is determined to ensure that it has the right skills and knowledge needed to challenge leaders. Board members have undertaken training in safeguarding and received information from the trust in order that they may better understand the school's intended curriculum. Board members are continuing to come into the school to check for themselves how pupil premium funding is being spent. They demonstrate an improving insight into the wide-ranging support these pupils receive and the impact this is having.

Staff are buoyant and, despite the intensive work that is taking place to effect improvement, they are positive about working at the school and support the very

clear vision of the executive headteacher. Parents spoken to were overwhelmingly supportive of the changes taking place. They say their children are increasingly happy to go to school and come home excited by their learning.

Leaders ensure that the school keeps pupils safe. Staff continue to be well trained and know how to report concerns. These are swiftly followed up by the designated safeguarding leads. They work tirelessly and tenaciously with external agencies to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and their families get the support they need. Appropriate checks are undertaken on all adults who work at the school.

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

- Leaders' work to develop staff expertise in the teaching of early reading is proving successful. Teachers and support staff are receiving appropriate training in how to teach phonics. Leaders should continue to be relentless in their work to ensure that all pupils become fluent readers.
- Leaders' determined focus to ensure that pupils read widely and often is having a positive impact. Pupils are beginning to talk knowledgeably and with great enthusiasm about the books they are reading in class and from the school's newly created library.
- Leaders are continuing to ensure that the development of the curriculum is a focus. The sequence of learning in many subjects is being carefully considered and planned for. Leaders recognise that planning is put in place for subjects such as computing and design and technology. Assessment in English and mathematics is becoming increasingly accurate. Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is underway but not yet well-formed.
- Leaders are continuing their highly effective focus on improving provision for pupils with SEND, to ensure that these pupils receive the help they need. Leaders hold the same high ambitions for this group of pupils as they do for others. Pupils are being supported well pastorally and in lessons, so they can successfully access their learning and their curriculum is not narrowed.
- Leaders are working diligently to ensure that pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum. Creative aspects of the curriculum are developing well. Interesting trips and visitors, for example, are increasingly enhancing pupils' learning in lessons. Consequently, pupils are beginning to enjoy their learning and engaging more readily in lessons.
- Leaders' successful recruitment is settling staffing and enabling them to plan more confidently for the future of the school. Leaders are continuing to hold staff to account for improvements in their work.

- Leaders' consistent and effective approach to pupils' behaviour is demonstrating continuing success. This approach is understood well by pupils and staff. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing significantly. Should poor behaviour take place, leaders are now dealing with this swiftly. No poor behaviour was observed during the inspection.
- Leaders are determined that pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum and that it is taught well throughout the school. Further work is underway to develop the skills and expertise of subject leaders so that any actions for improvement can be swiftly identified and acted upon.

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

- Work to improve teaching and pupils' learning in mathematics is in the earliest stages of development. Leaders recognise that this needs to develop rapidly so the emerging success of the new approach becomes firmly embedded.

### **External support**

The trust is continuing to provide an external moderator to check the accuracy of assessment in writing. Two external consultants are working effectively with the school to develop leadership and reading. The school is working closely with specialist teachers from a nearby special school to ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well.