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Mr Simon Wood
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Dear Mr Wood

Special measures monitoring inspection of Copperfield Academy

Following my visit with Teresa Davies, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 21–22 May 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 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 January 2019.

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 school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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 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 first monitoring inspection on 21 to 22 May 2019

Evidence

During this monitoring inspection, inspectors conducted joint lesson observations with you and one of the acting deputy headteachers. Inspectors met with you and other staff with significant responsibilities. I met with the regional director of REAch2 Academy Trust and the chief operating officer of REAch2 Academy Trust who is also chair of the intervention board. I met with three governors on the intervention board. I also met formally with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and inspectors spoke to pupils informally when in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors met with a group of staff and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I conducted a work scrutiny of a range of pupils' work with school leaders. Inspectors scrutinised the school's documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress and records relating to safeguarding. The single central record was checked.

Context

This was the first monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in January 2019. Since the inspection, a number of teachers and support staff have left. A consultant deputy headteacher has been appointed to cover the maternity leave of one of the acting deputy headteachers. Currently nine classes from Reception to Year 6 are covered by unqualified teachers. You are intending to recruit 10 teachers to start in September 2019. The wider leadership team is now in place, with two acting deputy headteachers separately taking responsibility for curriculum and inclusion. The extended leadership team is made up of phase leaders and year group leaders. The school has recently appointed a special educational needs learning support assistant and a part-time special educational needs teacher who will be starting in September 2019.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

School leaders and governors are working effectively to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders rightly recognise that further improvements are needed.

The trust's statement of action and transformation plan identify clearly the areas for improvement noted in the January 2019 inspection report. You and your senior team bring a sense of urgency as well as a clear and united vision to ensure that improvements are being made quickly.

You are successfully ensuring that systems and processes to keep pupils safe in school are maintained. You have sensibly trained two further members of staff to be deputy designated safeguarding leads, reflecting the high vulnerabilities and complex needs of some pupils in the school. Staff receive appropriate training in

relation to child protection, extremism and radicalisation, alongside regular safeguarding updates. You are in the early stages of introducing an electronic system for recording concerns. The single central record is maintained well. The trust sensibly undertakes termly safeguarding audits and any actions that may arise are swiftly followed up. Pupils have warm, nurturing relationships with staff which enable them to feel well cared for.

You convey your vision for the future success of the school with great conviction and passion. The needs of the pupils are at the centre of all decisions you make. The trust, leaders and staff are clear about your high expectations and are now beginning to understand how standards need to be raised. You are rightly prioritising the rapid improvement of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils. The school's transformation plan provides clear timescales, key responsibilities and effective success criteria to facilitate improvements. The newly formed intervention board is regularly reviewing progress towards the actions in the plan to ensure that improvements to the quality of education are effective and sustainable.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that effective monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' learning takes place. Leaders are now intensively monitoring the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Regular meetings are being held between leaders and staff to check on pupils' progress. Staff are being held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes and are given appropriate professional development to improve their practice where needed. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving. Nonetheless, you rightly recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that all teaching is consistently strong. You, with the help of the trust, have put together an innovative recruitment campaign to employ the many teachers needed for September to further strengthen the quality of teaching across the school.

Teachers are becoming more skilled in assessing pupils' work accurately. You are ensuring that teachers are clear about age-related expectations and how pupils can be challenged to work at higher standards. The trust is providing much support for this area of the school's work. For example, the trust is providing an external moderator to check the accuracy of assessment. As a result of this greater accuracy, leaders and the governors on the intervention board can now confidently track and challenge pupils' progress.

Middle leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, are given appropriate time and training to lead their areas of expertise. They are showing an increasing understanding of their responsibilities and the impact they can have. However, their work is in its early stages and hampered in part by the high level of staff changes.

Pupils have access to a broad curriculum and they enjoy subjects such as science, history and geography. On the whole, teachers' expectations for work in subjects

other than English and mathematics are high but this is not consistent across all year groups and classes. Teachers do not yet carefully consider how lessons should be sequenced or how to assess pupils' progress in a broad range of subjects. You are beginning to shape the school's curriculum so it is more effective for pupils, but this is currently underdeveloped.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been improved since the previous inspection. You are starting to provide an exciting and interesting range of experiences to enliven learning in the classrooms. For example, Year 6 pupils visited the Royal Albert Hall in London and are looking forward to their upcoming trip to France. You have made useful links with the local gurdwara and during the inspection pupils in key stage 1 were greatly enjoying their 'dinosaur' visitors. You recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that pupils learn a modern foreign language and develop their knowledge and understanding about Christianity and other religions. Your work to ensure that pupils show respect to all, regardless of their gender, race or sexual orientation is having a positive impact. As a result, pupils show a good understanding of these issues and their equal importance.

The quality of governance, including at trust level, is improving. The trust members recognise that they have been too slow to act in the past. Trust members and the intervention board are now working together closely for the benefit of the school. The trust is supporting you in improving the physical condition of the many buildings on the site and ensuring that finances are available to improve teaching and learning, including helping with recruitment. Trustees and members of the intervention board now have a deeper understanding about the challenges which the school faces. Minutes of their meetings show that members of intervention board are beginning to offer robust challenge to school leaders and the trust. They would benefit from further training, so they have a precise understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The imminent review of governance is timely to assess the impact of their work so far.

Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is now being used more effectively to ensure that they receive the support they need. The external review of the school's use of this funding just prior to the previous inspection was comprehensive. Leaders have accurately identified barriers to pupils' learning and are putting in place well-considered interventions and support. Teachers are now focusing more carefully on the needs of this group of pupils and consequently some pupils are making strong progress. However, this is not consistent across the school and high levels of variability remain. The school's own performance information shows that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is now beginning to close.

Parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about the improvements you have made to the school, although unsurprisingly they remain wary at this early stage. Staff spoke highly about your leadership and appreciate that their thoughts are considered and valued. They recognise that standards need to improve and feel clearer about what they need to do to ensure that this happens.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Overall, classrooms are orderly places. Pupils are compliant. They try hard and listen to teachers well. In some classes, teachers are developing their skills effectively. In such instances, adults are more alert to ensuring that pupils move more quickly from one task to the next, so they retain their interest and focus. However, this is not consistently the case and, consequently, the quality of teaching remains highly variable. This is further exacerbated by the high level of staff changes or staff who are absent.

The work of the acting deputy headteacher with responsibility for inclusion is commendable. Together, you are determined that no pupil should 'slip through the net'. You have ensured that the register of pupils with SEND is up to date and accurate. A full audit of resources to support this group of pupils has taken place and staff have received helpful training on how these can be used. For example, teachers and support staff are using resources such as 'talking tins' effectively to help pupils with their writing.

In order to strengthen the provision for pupils with SEND you are working closely with a local special school. You have identified precisely the right training for staff to help them support the needs of the pupils in your school. You have also sensibly recruited specialist staff to model strategies and train less-experienced staff to support pupils in the classroom. This is enabling these pupils to access the curriculum more successfully.

The teaching of reading is improving. You have introduced a phonics scheme to help pupils learn how to read. The teaching of phonics begins in early years, where children are successfully taught to learn and blend sounds. However, there is some inconsistency in the teaching of phonics and further training is needed to ensure greater consistency across all classes and groups so that pupils can make the best possible progress with their reading.

Attractive displays around the school illustrate your firm aspiration to develop pupils' vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. Work in pupils' books shows that they write often and at length across a broad range of subjects. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting varies across classes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Staff, parents and pupils say that behaviour has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured that the behaviour policy is understood by all and is applied consistently and fairly. However, some inconsistencies remain, particularly where teaching is less strong.

School records show that there has been a reduction in incidents of extreme behaviour and low-level disruption in classes. Pupils report that sometimes their

learning is affected by a few pupils, but this is a minority. They say that some pupils can be unkind, but they are confident that staff will help them sort out any concerns or worries they may have. They say that the school is a caring and friendly place. During the inspection pupils were observed playing happily together, working in pairs or groups in class and participating in team games on the playground.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' manners. They explicitly model these. As a result, pupils are learning how to show respect to staff and to their peers, despite, in some cases, significant cultural barriers.

Outcomes for pupils

You recognise that the attainment of pupils is not yet high enough. Nonetheless, there are green shoots of improvement beginning to emerge. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that pupils overall, since the start of this academic year, are making better progress in English and mathematics. Leaders' analysis of information is meticulous, and the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils is tracked and monitored carefully.

However, the inconsistent quality of teaching and learning leads to variable rates of progress for individual pupils. Some teachers do not routinely use assessment information effectively to inform teaching and planning. Consequently, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.

External support

The trust has provided an external moderator to check the accuracy of assessment in writing. The school is working closely with a local special school to help develop good practice for pupils with SEND.