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Mr Ian Harrison
Principal
Tudor Grange Samworth Academy, A Church of England School
Trenant Road
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Dear Mr Harrison

Special measures monitoring inspection of Tudor Grange Samworth Academy

Following my visit with Ann Glynne-Jones, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 29 to 30 November 2016, 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 May 2015. 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 in Year 1 and Year 4 in the primary phase, and in mathematics, and English in the secondary phase, provided that they receive support from the Tudor Grange Academies Trust.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the multi-academy trust board, the director of education for the diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2015.

- Improve the quality of teaching across all year groups by ensuring that all teachers:
 - accurately assess pupils' work and plan learning to challenge all groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, the most able, and disadvantaged
 - have high expectations for behaviour and use the academy's systems for managing behaviour consistently and lessons are planned that engage pupils in their learning
 - plan the work of teaching assistants more carefully so that their work is focused on improving learning rather than just on managing behaviour
 - insist on high standards of pupils' presentation of work, that pupils take sufficient care over their work, and regularly do their best.
- Raise achievement across the academy, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - developing a more consistent approach across all subjects to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the extra help for individuals and small groups during lessons
 - improving the identification of the individual learning needs of disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and planning more effective support, including from teaching assistants.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making leadership roles clear and sufficiently accountable
 - ensuring that subject leaders and those with other roles of responsibility, such as for special educational needs, have sufficient training and skills to carry out their roles effectively
 - taking action to engage parents and gain the trust and support of those who are not currently confident about the academy
 - evaluating more rigorously the use of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils, those who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy in Year 7 and the development of additional sporting activities in the primary age range
 - ensuring that the governors and sponsors are more effective in monitoring the academy and checking that agreed actions have had sufficient impact
 - using the new leaders' accurate evaluation of academy performance to create an action plan for improvement, with clear criteria to judge success.
- Improve the management of behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring that all staff regularly insist on high standards of behaviour, especially for those who find it difficult to comply, by making effective use of the academy's behaviour code in lessons
 - making sure that expectations for presentation of work, grammar, punctuation and spelling are consistently high, especially for older pupils

- ensuring that expectations for wearing uniform are high enough and pupils comply with them
- making sure that strategies to improve attendance are more effective and codes for recording absence are used accurately.

An external review of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 29 November 2016 to 30 November 2016

Evidence

Inspectors met with the principal, the head of school (primary), senior leaders and representatives from the trust. They met formally with two groups of pupils and informally with others in class and around school. They observed teaching and learning in classrooms and pupils' behaviour as they arrived to school and at break and lunchtimes. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school's development plan, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement, examples of leaders' monitoring activities and safeguarding documents. Inspectors considered the progress the school has made towards the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Context

Since the previous inspection, eleven members of staff including three senior leaders have left the school. One new senior leader joined the school in May 2016.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have worked effectively together to ensure that the pace of improvement has quickened since the previous monitoring visit in May 2016. With the appointment of new leaders, and the restructuring of the leadership team, there is now greater clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, and capacity to secure improvement. This has meant that individual leaders have been able to focus precisely on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

The leadership and staffing of the school are now in a more stable position than previously. Leadership in the primary phase is now secure, while one or two key appointments remain to be filled in the secondary phase. Leaders are well aware that the appointment of credible leaders to the remaining vacancies will be crucial in demonstrating the school's capacity to sustain improvement.

Leaders have successfully implemented a number of well-chosen initiatives which are beginning to show early signs of impact. For example, there are improved systems to gather information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress. Leaders ensure that they carefully analyse and use this information to bring about the necessary improvements. Improvements to behaviour systems are bearing fruit. The school is a calmer and more orderly environment, and these improvements are having a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning.

Improved leadership of teaching is ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning

and assessment is gradually developing across the school. Leaders are now addressing the weaknesses in teaching with greater rigour, and have put in place measures to support and challenge teaching that is still not good enough. These measures are proving effective.

Leaders have clarified their expectations of teaching. When they monitor teaching, whether through lesson observations or the scrutiny of pupils' work, they focus with increasing precision on the key issues: for example, whether teaching is enabling all pupils to make progress, and whether feedback is simple and effective. The simplicity of this approach is proving beneficial to teachers. In your recent staff survey, the overwhelming majority of staff confirmed that they understood what was expected of them.

The culture across the school is changing, with greater accountability from the middle leaders and the vast majority of staff. Middle leaders continue to develop their skills in quality assurance. Since the previous monitoring visit they have developed their own self-evaluation forms that indicate a more accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their departments. There is more to do to ensure that middle leaders in the primary phase take opportunities to work alongside colleagues to develop teaching, learning and assessment, and monitor the impact of their work. There is a coherent development plan in place for mathematics in the primary phase, based on a sound evaluation of the areas for improvement. However, this is not yet the case in English. This must be addressed with urgency.

Not all middle leaders are equally effective in their roles. You have identified that predictions for key stage 4 outcomes in 2016 were not accurate in all subject areas, and you are working with leaders from across the trust to improve this situation. To this end, leaders from the trust organised a trust-wide training day to allow staff to work alongside colleagues from other schools to moderate pupils' assessments. While it is too soon to judge the impact of this initiative, governors have rightly asked you to ensure that senior leaders continue to monitor and improve the accuracy of assessments. This will be checked carefully on my next visit.

You have appointed a new safeguarding lead who is in the process of overhauling systems to record and respond to child protection and safeguarding concerns. This leader brings considerable experience and expertise to this role and is ensuring that there is greater capacity to respond to concerns. A key component of this strategy has been supporting staff to carry out early help assessments, ensuring that senior safeguarding personnel have more capacity to deal with the more serious concerns.

Leaders' work to engage parents continues to develop. Increasing numbers of parents attend their child's parents' evening, and other information events that the school arranges. In the primary phase, the workshop on phonics was well attended, as was the 'grandparents' afternoon'. In the secondary phase, the recent session on preventing child sexual exploitation, while not greatly attended, was another important step in building links with the local community. Parents show increasing

confidence in the work of the school. Those who spoke with inspectors raised no issues or concerns, and were happy with the improvements being made. This is a significant development since the first monitoring visit.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They have an accurate view of the current strengths and weaknesses of the school and use their considerable skills and experience to bring the necessary scrutiny to the school's work. Governors make useful and helpful suggestions; for example, about how the pupil premium funding might be better spent. They question carefully the decisions behind teachers' pay rises to ensure that they are based on evidence of sustained performance and are just. They are honest about which aspects of the school need further improvement.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The early signs of improvement noted at the previous monitoring visit continue to develop. Following the previous monitoring visit, leaders put in place plans to address the weaknesses identified in marking and feedback, and these plans have had some impact. Teachers are increasingly providing feedback in line with the school's policy and pupils are finding this helpful. There are still some instances where the feedback is too lengthy and detailed. You agree that this needs to be tackled, not least in order to ensure that teachers are using their planning and marking time effectively. Increasingly, the 'exit' tasks that pupils complete are well used to signal which areas of the learning they have mastered and which need further attention. It is not always clear how this important information is gathered and used by teachers and other staff to plug the gaps in pupils' learning.

Where learning is more effective, it is because teachers build precisely on what pupils are able to do and provide the right support to help them progress. For example, in a Year 2 English session, the teacher used her secure subject knowledge to good effect, providing clear explanations and highlighting the key words that pupils needed to complete the task. Not all staff in the primary phase use the information they have about pupils' achievement to ensure that teaching is well planned, or that interventions are appropriate. Not all teachers act with the necessary sense of urgency to enable pupils to catch up.

In the sessions observed, teachers had clearly made efforts to plan interesting and engaging activities for pupils. In some cases, these tasks are still not well matched to pupils' abilities. The most able pupils and middle-attaining pupils sometimes complete tasks that are beneath their ability level, or have to wait to move onto more challenging tasks. Sometimes, the additional tasks they are given do not deepen or develop their learning sufficiently. Equally so, it is not always clear what support is in place for the high proportion of pupils currently, and in some cases incorrectly, identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers do not have all the information they need to plan effective learning for these pupils.

In the lessons visited, behaviour was for the most part calm, orderly and respectful. In a drama session, the teacher was highly effective in letting a few pupils know that they had let her down without allowing this to interrupt learning. There is more to do to ensure that all teachers fully stamp their authority on their classes.

The more structured approach to teaching reading and phonics in the primary phase is showing early signs of improving pupils' reading skills. However, a culture of reading is not well embedded across the school. Teachers do not ensure that pupils read sufficiently challenging books and in some instances there is insufficient support for children who do not read regularly at home. Some pupils reported that they would like a greater variety of reading texts available to them.

Teachers do not consistently develop pupils' literacy in subjects other than English. At times pupils are able to access the resources that will help them develop their spelling and improve their written work. Nor do they have the guidance they need to access higher marks, or the next grade, in their assessments.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have made considerable progress in improving pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. The introduction of a new uniform at the start of this academic year has led to pupils feeling a greater sense of pride in their school. You have introduced the 'Tudor values' – these are prominently on display around school and staff and pupils know these well. You are making progress in ensuring that all staff model the values of the school consistently well. Assembly time is used well to develop the core, Christian values of the school, although there is more to do to ensure that tutor time is a consistently positive start to the day for all pupils.

The physical environment of the school has been improved, with new décor and seating arrangements in the dining area and improved outdoor spaces. Pupils are particularly enjoying the new table tennis tables. You have responded to some of the Year 5 and 6 pupils' concerns about older pupils entering the primary building – secondary pupils no longer have access to this area. The move to a split lunchtime has meant that lunch is now calmer and better managed. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were universally positive about this change.

You have improved the systems for managing pupils' behaviour, so that any instances of poor behaviour are dealt with, in the first instance, by the curriculum leaders. This important change has ensured that all staff have a better understanding of their role in managing and improving pupils' behaviour, and are increasingly consistent in how they apply the school's policy. While a significant improvement from the previous monitoring inspection, this remains an area for further development.

The introduction of the 'Skills, Action, Service' (SAS) lessons is improving pupils'

personal development and well-being. In the sessions visited, pupils were eagerly developing their skills in set design, orienteering and creative cookery. It was particularly encouraging to hear some of the school's most vulnerable pupils speak with such confidence and passion about their gardening successes. The greater range of opportunities open to older pupils shows early promise of increasing their participation in education, employment and training, and their aspiration. Pupils have particularly enjoyed their visits to Russell Group universities and inspirational talks by visiting speakers. As one pupil commented, 'I have been inspired to work towards my once unachievable goal of attending Cambridge University, which I would never have even considered before.'

The impact of leaders' work to improve behaviour shows signs of positive impact. The number of behaviour incidents is reducing, and fewer pupils are now referred to the 'hot spot' room. More importantly, they no longer see their referral to this room as something to boast about. The proportion of pupils who are excluded from the school on a fixed-term basis has greatly reduced. Attendance is improving, and it is particularly pleasing to note the much better attendance of Year 11 pupils. Nonetheless, there is more to do to address ongoing attendance concerns in some year groups, and for some groups of pupils.

There is evidence across the primary and secondary phases of pupils engaging in mature, thoughtful discussion about their learning, but this is far from consistent as yet. While attitudes to learning are gradually improving, some pupils remain concerned about the proportion of learning that is interrupted by poor behaviour. For some pupils, and in particular for boys, poor attitudes to learning remain engrained and addressing this requires a determined, resilient approach from all staff. Your middle leaders recognise this challenge. As one of them commented, 'We need to let them know that they can't get away with it any more.'

Outcomes for pupils

Unvalidated data for 2016 indicates that in both the primary and secondary phases, outcomes for pupils remain well below national expectations. While these low outcomes were for the most part expected, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that all teachers are equally confident in making secure, accurate predictions. The progress of the most able and middle-attaining pupils across the school is concerning; too few of these pupils were able to capitalise on their earlier achievements. At key stage 4, very few pupils achieved higher grades in any subject. Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their peers and so the gaps between their achievement and that of all pupils nationally are not diminishing quickly enough. At key stage 2, despite some improvements in teaching, outcomes remain well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average in 2016, representing poor progress from their starting points.

At key stage 1, outcomes showed some improvement and were mostly in line with

national expectations. However, the proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening check fell from the previous year and was well below the national level. Leaders are confident that, as a result of more structured teaching of phonics from an earlier age, a much higher proportion of the pupils currently in Year 1 will achieve this measure. The proportion of children who secured a good level of development at the end of the early years in 2016 increased on the previous year and is now in line with the national average. Children eligible for support through the pupil premium funding fared better than their peers.

Analysis of current pupils' progress points to ongoing concerns, with too much inconsistency between subjects, too few pupils making the progress expected and disparity in the progress of different groups. Where in some subjects pupils have made good progress from their starting points, this is too inconsistent as yet to point to a sustained upward trend of improvement. In some classes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities keep pace with their peers. In others, these pupils perform markedly less well, indicating that strategies to improve teaching for these pupils have not been entirely successful. With few exceptions, disadvantaged pupils continue to lag behind their peers.

Leaders are rightly exercising caution in looking only at pupils' current achievement in order to make predictions for 2017. They have put action plans in place to address the specific areas of weakness in each subject and year group. The impact of these plans will be reviewed at the next monitoring inspection.

External support

As a result of the improvements to leadership, the trust has been able to reduce some of the support it provides to the school. The two executive principals supporting the school have rightly stepped back, allowing school leaders to take greater responsibility for leading and sustaining improvement. By the same token, staff from within the school are beginning to develop and deliver their own training to colleagues. In some areas, the school continues to rely on support from the trust, particularly where they have not been able to appoint permanent leaders.

School and trust leaders acknowledge the challenge the school faces in being geographically distant from the other schools in the trust, and are working on potential solutions to this issue. In the meantime, staff and leaders continue to benefit where possible from working alongside colleagues in other schools, for example at the recent training day, and in visits to other trust schools to learn from best practice.