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Mr Andrew Knowles
Tupton Hall School
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Dear Mr Knowles

Special measures monitoring inspection of Tupton Hall School

Following my visit with Karen Hayes, Ofsted Inspector, and Harkireet Sohel, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 26 and 27 September 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 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 May 2017.

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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - take action more swiftly to tackle areas in need of improvement
 - account carefully for the allocation of additional funding and evaluate its impact on pupils' progress, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - hold teachers to account closely and check that they are following agreed practices
 - evaluate carefully the impact of the school's work and amend strategies accordingly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of what all pupils are able to achieve
 - plan activities that challenge all pupils
 - plan activities that challenge and engage pupils so that they are supported to become more effective learners
 - use questioning to facilitate greater discussion and exploration and to involve all pupils to develop their reasoning and to deepen their understanding.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 26 September 2018 to 27 September 2018

Evidence

Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the Redhill Academy Trust, the executive headteacher, the headteacher, and members of the senior and middle leadership teams. Inspectors also met with members of the teaching staff, including those teachers new to the profession. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and spoke with a member of the governing body by telephone. Inspectors visited 31 lessons across different subjects and age groups, accompanied by senior leaders. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and talked with pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, including during breaktime and lunchtime, when they observed pupils' behaviour. The inspection team evaluated the impact of the school's actions linked to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher has left the school and the senior leadership team has been restructured. Twenty-eight members of the teaching staff have left the school. Twenty-four teachers have been appointed to the school. There is new leadership of English, science, social sciences, design and technology, ethics and philosophy. New pastoral leaders have also been appointed.

Two new parent governors have joined the governing body.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have shown great resilience and determination to improve the school since the previous inspection. Their actions have had impact and have begun the journey of the school's improvement.

The school is due to join the Redhill Academy Trust. It has not been agreed when this will finally happen. This is a frustrating situation for all involved, including school leaders and the trust. A resolution to this matter is needed.

Senior leaders have strengthened the processes to closely check that staff are following agreed practices. Teachers' performance is managed more effectively, and rightly, their targets link closely to ensure that pupils achieve as they should.

The quality of middle leadership has significantly improved. Middle leaders said that they are committed to ensure that the provision for pupils rapidly improves. Their planning and their actions reflect this intention. These leaders are more effectively held to account to ensure that they conduct their roles successfully. They said that

they welcomed the increased rigour and that they valued the received support from senior colleagues. There is a real enthusiasm for the further school improvement and professional development opportunities that joining the trust is likely to bring.

On behalf of the school, the local authority commissioned an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding. Leaders have acted quickly on its recommendations. The pupil premium strategy, however, requires further refinement. Clarity and precision are needed. Current published key stage 4 information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are still not achieving as they should.

The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not as strong as is needed. This group of pupils continue to underachieve. Pupils told inspectors that their experience of learning is inconsistent. In some lessons, their learning needs are met well, for example in humanities; however, this was not the case in other lessons. Some of these pupils are also disadvantaged and so have additional barriers to their learning. Leaders are aware that this is still an urgent issue for the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders' actions have improved aspects of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most teachers follow the Tupton Hall Teaching Charter. Leaders' information indicates that this has helped to create a more consistent approach to teaching. Teachers' expectations of pupils have been raised. Inspection evidence concurs with this view. Teachers' planning for pupils' learning is increasingly thorough. Many teachers take time and great effort to produce resources that engage pupils' interest in the subjects they are studying. Where learning is strong, teachers have high expectations for all pupils within the class and pitch the learning appropriately to best meet their needs. Inspectors saw evidence of this in the humanities, science and English faculties. Pupils told inspectors the quality of teaching in their lessons had improved since the previous inspection.

The execution of teachers' planning is not consistently strong. This means the needs of some pupils are not met well enough. This is particularly the case for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the most able and disadvantaged pupils.

Teachers' questioning requires development. Teachers still do not probe pupils' understanding sufficiently thoroughly in order to extend their responses or challenge their thinking.

Although there is improvement, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent. Some pupils still do not make the progress they should in some of their lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The newly implemented behaviour policy is effective. Pupils' behaviour around school and within lessons has improved. Pupils conduct themselves well around school. In lessons, when they are fully engaged in learning, they exhibit a real enthusiasm and thirst to achieve. Pupils said that they appreciated that the behaviour in school had improved and they felt safe and well supported. The number of 'positive attitude to learning points' awarded to pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, has increased.

Pupils receive extensive and meaningful care and support within the Aspire provision. The inclusion and extended services leader ensures a bespoke and effective approach for the pupils included in this provision. Pupils told the inspector that they 'would not have survived' in school without this support. They said they knew that staff had 'bent over backwards' for them and that their help 'really mattered'.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities did not attend school as often as others in 2018.

Outcomes for pupils

Improving pupils' outcomes remains a challenge for leaders. They rightly acknowledge that recent, unvalidated published key stage 4 information indicates that outcomes remain inadequate.

Leaders' information predicts a marked improvement in pupils' outcomes at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Current Year 11 pupils are forecast by leaders to attain at levels above the national average across eight subjects studied. Importantly, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also forecast to improve.

The gender achievement gap is predicted to narrow, particularly at key stage 3. There is developing evidence of more boys engaged in their learning, and therefore making better progress.

Evidence from lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that teachers are better using the information about pupils' achievement to plan for their learning. However, inconsistency remains in this aspect of teaching.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support for the school's improvement.

The trust has acted decisively and shown goodwill. They have commenced their support to the school from September 2018. This includes the expert guidance of an

executive headteacher, and intensive support at subject level from trust subject directors. Staff and leaders will also access professional development, including visiting schools within the trust to observe teaching.