

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 April 2018

Ms Jo Hill
Headteacher
Olive Ap Academy – Thurrock
Leicester Road
Tilbury
RM18 7AX

Dear Ms Hill

Special measures monitoring inspection of Olive Ap Academy – Thurrock

Following my visit to your academy on 20 to 21 March 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2017. 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.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Take urgent action to ensure that the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective by:
 - maintaining written records and supporting evidence that identify the actions taken to protect pupils
 - routinely checking safeguarding records to ensure that systems and procedures are effective in keeping pupils safe
 - undertaking routine checks on the quality and safety of site provision
 - ensuring that all essential site maintenance is undertaken quickly and effectively
 - referring all children who are missing from education to the local authority, within the statutory timeframe
 - ensuring that risk assessments for educational trips and visits adequately assess the potential hazards of activities for staff and pupils, giving clear guidance about how to minimise these risks.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - refining and clarifying the roles of all leaders in the school, including those in the local governing body
 - ensuring that there is effective leadership of provision for children looked after, literacy, the use of pupil premium, safeguarding arrangements, site safety and maintenance, and attendance
 - clarifying the purpose of the school with all stakeholders, including the local authority and local schools, so that there are shared expectations about admission and re-integration back into mainstream provision
 - continuing to work with the local authority on the backlog of pupils who require a long-overdue decision about their application for an education, health and care plan, and subsequent appropriate provision
 - ensuring that trust personnel, most notably at executive headteacher level, continue to support the new leadership team to embed their work and bring stability to the school
 - embedding the actions taken so far to monitor the quality of provision for the pupils in home tuition
 - continuing development of the curriculum to ensure that pupils receive a tailored pathway that suits their specific needs, and that the quality of this provision is monitored effectively.

- Improve attendance and behaviour by:
 - developing new systems to urgently increase the attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and those who attend alternative provision
 - rapidly increasing the provision for the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils, as well as complex learning needs, so that they can develop better relationships and interact more effectively and, as a result, make better progress
 - embedding the new behaviour systems and closely scrutinising leaders' analysis of the effectiveness of the systems, so that interventions to support pupils to rectify their behaviour are timely and effective.
- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - developing the new assessment system so that it can be used more effectively by teachers and leaders to ensure pupils make better progress
 - urgently addressing the poor-quality indoor and outdoor provision of the primary site, so that it successfully provides the nurturing, tactile learning environment that meets the complex learning and mental health needs of pupils
 - continuing to develop the new approaches to improving the quality of teaching
 - sharing the examples of good practice in the school with all teachers.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers without the agreement of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

An external review of the use of the additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils (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 20 March 2018 to 21 March 2018

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders and the chair of the interim progress board. The inspector also met with the chief executive of the trust, the director of academy effectiveness and standards, an Olive Academy Multi-Academy Trust board trustee and the head of inclusion services from the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the Department for Education.

The inspector visited seven lessons jointly with the deputy headteacher, across different subjects and year groups. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school and analysed a sample of pupils' work. The inspector also scrutinised the school's documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the single central record and the interim progress board records.

The inspector assessed the impact of leaders' actions taken since the last monitoring visit in October 2017. This focused on aspects of leadership and management, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, and the quality of teaching. Records of pupils' progress were discussed. The impact of teaching and learning on outcomes will be a focus during the next monitoring visit.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, three members of staff have resigned from their positions and two teachers have returned to work following long-term absence. A deputy headteacher has been appointed to fill the vacancy for leading teaching, learning and assessment, and outdoor resilience. He was a previously an assistant headteacher at the school with responsibility for outdoor learning. The school has extended the team of staff to give greater breadth and depth of expertise. Leaders have appointed an experienced English teacher and three associate tutors who have started at the school. The school has appointed a teacher for key stage 3 nurture, literacy and numeracy; a teacher for outdoor learning, physical education (PE), biology and personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE); a teacher for key stage 3 nurture and 'The Bridge'; a teacher for English, PE and outdoor learning and an area lead teacher for language, communication and the arts, who will teach dance, PSCHE and work skills. The school has also appointed a teacher for English and outdoor learning, who starts in the autumn term.

The school reached out to one of its partnership schools, St Clere's School, to help provide additional teaching capacity until Easter. An English teacher is on a two-day secondment each week and a design and technology teacher is on a one-day

secondment each week. Both teachers are from St Clere's School.

The school has a long-term supply teacher who is primary qualified.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

You, your senior leadership team, the trust and the interim progress board have continued to take steps to address the issues identified in the previous inspection report, in January 2017. The trust personnel, most notably the chief executive of the trust and the director of academy effectiveness and standards, continue to support the leadership team to embed their work and bring stability to the school.

You have high expectations and are relentless in your goal to improve all aspects of the school's work. Leaders have quite rightly focused on embedding the improvements seen at the last monitoring visit. However, this has not been at the expense of a persistent drive to improve the school even further. The swift work that you have undertaken so far is to establish the basic systems and processes so desperately needed. You work with determination to provide the very best for pupils. Leaders are steadfast in making a positive difference to pupils' lives. This has resulted in greater cohesion and higher expectations throughout the school, noticeably since the last monitoring visit.

The trust and the interim progress board are well appointed to be fully involved in all aspects of the school's development and in the monitoring of improvement. They have been an admirable support to you and your senior leaders. They know the school exceptionally well and are confident and skilled to ask challenging questions. There are clear procedures for the sharing of information at all levels. You ensure that they have up-to-date, accurate information about key aspects of the school's performance, including pupils' academic progress, behaviour and attendance. Records of recent meetings demonstrate appropriate challenge to leaders on the effectiveness of their actions or intentions.

You have continued to ensure that there is transparency across the trust, the interim progress board and senior leadership team about the allocation of roles and responsibilities. All stakeholders, including the local authority and local schools, are now clear about the purpose of the school and have shared expectations about admission. You acknowledge that further work needs to be done in order to reintegrate more pupils back into mainstream provision.

Since the first monitoring visit, you have rightly focused on eliminating inadequate teaching and stabilising the staff team to enhance the quality and consistency of provision for the pupils. You have also extended the number of subjects on offer at key stage 3 from Easter to include dance, music and the arts. There are early signs of success, with leaders' initial work to reintegrate some pupils from home tuition into the main school.

Systems that have been put in place by leaders, since the first progress monitoring visit, to record information about pupils' academic progress are strong. Leaders are aware that they now need to encourage staff to use this information more effectively to determine what expected outcomes should look like for each pupil. You are also aware that staff should evaluate pupils' progress towards their specific targets and take action swiftly if progress is not good enough.

Checks made by leaders on pupils' progress and on teaching are accurate. Leaders now observe teaching frequently and give feedback on how teaching can be further improved.

Leaders endeavour to gain suitable support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there are still some pupils with a long-overdue decision about their application for an education, health and care plan.

You have ensured that safeguarding remains a high priority in the school since the first monitoring visit and that the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective. The single central record of safeguarding checks was examined and is compliant with the latest regulations. You promote the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Security checks on staff are now meticulous and records are secure. Staff undertake regular and appropriate training. Leaders have established effective links with a wide range of other agencies and this supports the school in keeping pupils safe.

Risk assessments continue to assess the potential hazards of activities for staff and pupils in an effective manner. The new risk assessment and safeguarding recording systems are now embedded, ensuring the utmost level of consistency. You now ensure that the summary of visits and evaluations are completed in detail.

A review of the school's use of the pupil premium grant has taken place. Leaders have taken appropriate actions to begin to improve the effectiveness of pupil premium spending. A suitable strategy plan has been drawn up and a leader with specific responsibility oversees its progress. Teachers are provided with training to support the progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Attendance plans have been developed, therapeutic interventions are scheduled, and literacy, numeracy and language development is a whole-school focus. The pupil premium work is in its early stages. Consequently, it is too early to see the full impact of this work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Some improvements in the quality of teaching, reported at the previous monitoring visit, have not been built upon swiftly enough. Teaching remains inconsistent. In several lessons observed, teachers missed opportunities to check what pupils already knew about the subject. Some pupils, including the most able, found the work too easy as it was not matched closely enough to their specific needs. This led

to pupils becoming uninterested and making slow progress. Pupils that the inspector spoke to requested more challenging work to be set. Expectations are not consistently high enough because not all teachers challenge pupils to do their best all of the time.

Green shoots are starting to emerge across the school in relation to teaching and learning. Teachers are using effective relationships to engage pupils in their learning. When teachers set high expectations and adapt their plans to the specific interests and needs of the pupils, progress is evident. For example, pupils' work in an information and communication technology lesson and an English lesson was of a high standard because teaching was effective in providing learning experiences which captured pupils' interests. Pupils were engaged in their work because they understood the purpose of their learning. In these lessons, pupils confidently asked questions and staff responded to ensure that any misconceptions were put right and understood. Teachers' guidance was helpful and encouraged pupils to think more deeply and extend their ideas.

Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils' writing has both improved in quality and quantity since the last monitoring visit. Extended pieces of writing were evident across a range of subjects. Work in books is well presented and graffiti-free.

Moderation opportunities with other schools now take place in English and mathematics and some other subjects. You are fully aware that in order to strengthen assessment, this needs to be expanded on across other subject areas.

The regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by leaders are now providing teachers and support staff with the necessary feedback, which identifies strengths and areas to improve on. The new assessment system allows patterns and trends to be identified. This is reducing the inconsistency in teaching.

Information from pupils' previous schools was variable at the previous monitoring visit. Leaders are now assiduous in ensuring that pupils' former schools provide the information necessary so that pupils can make progress in their studies from as early as possible.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The behaviour of pupils overall has improved since the last monitoring visit. The number of exclusions and incidents involving inappropriate behaviour has continued to decline due to the consistency of policies being applied. Pupils say that they feel safe, that bullying is rare and that they know who to approach if they have any concerns.

There is a noticeable improvement in pupils' attitudes towards learning. For example, pupils that lost concentration in lessons during my visit responded swiftly to the direction and support given by staff and immediately returned to the work

set. Pupils' attitudes to learning are continuing to improve. Pupils spoken to had a clear desire to be challenged more in order to make more progress. For example, pupils in key stage 4 had a realistic idea of what they want to do when they leave school due to the strong careers advice and guidance you now provide. This is an improvement compared with the inspection in January 2017.

A new behaviour system has been introduced since the first monitoring visit. Behaviour is monitored more closely so that leaders can put appropriate personalised support in place for pupils. During the spring term, you experienced a reduction in exclusions due to the introduction of the new system. Pupils now report that their learning is not disrupted by pupils from other lessons as often as it was before the changes took place.

High levels of staff supervision ensure that breaktimes and lunchtimes are positive social experiences. Lunchtime is a particularly amicable time, with pupils commenting on how much they enjoy the company of their peers and the quality of food available.

Nevertheless, improvements in learning continue to be hampered by the overall attendance rate, which remains stubbornly low. The school's system to record and monitor attendance is strong. You are able to point to a number of individuals with whom you have had considerable success. However, you agree that more still needs to be done. You are aware that communicating the connection between academic success and low attendance to pupils and their families is a key element in raising attendance. You have, therefore, employed a family support worker in order to prioritise this.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupil outcomes still remain too low. Due to the history of poor-quality teaching, progress over time has been too slow. Scrutiny of current assessment information and observation of lessons shows that progress overall is not consistently strong. It is still in the early stages of development. There is a clear link between poor attendance and weak progress. You are working hard to resolve this.

Pupils across the school were observed to make strong progress when they were fully engaged in their learning. When pupils see a purpose for their learning, they are keen participants in lessons. However, some pupils disengage almost immediately when they find the work too easy or cannot relate it to their own needs.

There have been some recent noticeable successes in reintegrating pupils into mainstream schools. Further work needs doing to ensure that mainstream schools are clear as to why a pupil is ready to return to secondary mainstream education. Leaders now need to work with other providers to ensure clarity that all pupils, regardless of when they join the school, are able to move on to suitable, long-term

destinations to continue their education.

External support

The trust continues to provide very strong support for the school. Members of the trust visit on a regular basis and have an accurate understanding of the progress made so far. You wisely draw on the support of external consultants to make improvements to the school. A further external review of safeguarding was completed in March 2018 to assess the school's improvements since March 2017. An external review of the pupil premium took place in November 2017 and a follow-up visit is scheduled for the summer term.

You work very closely with the secondary headteachers that make use of the service. You continue to attend the meetings of the headteachers within the local authority to ensure that the profile of the school remains high.