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4 February 2016

Mr Jeremy Jackson
Principal
Webster Primary School
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Dear Mr Jackson

Short inspection of Webster Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 19 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2011.

There has been considerable change since the previous inspection. Webster Primary converted to academy status in April 2013. Far more pupils attend the school than in the past and the numbers are set to rise further in the near future. This has resulted in the appointment of additional staff, substantial building work and refurbishment of the school site. You now offer specialised resource provision for pupils with autism, and speech and language difficulties. The leadership team has also been restructured. Two members of your leadership team have taken on the role of heads of school.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the academy since the last inspection. The considerable changes at Webster have made many calls on your time and energy, but you have not allowed these to get in the way of your core business. You have stood firm, set your sights high and kept pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school at the heart of everything you do. Consequently, teaching continues to improve and pupils thrive.

Webster is stronger than at the last inspection because of your insightful leadership and the support you receive from a united team of leaders, staff and governors. You are not afraid to bring about change when it is needed, despite the cost and effort of retraining staff or purchasing resources. You do not hang on to old ways of working when it becomes apparent these strategies are no longer reaping rewards. Difficult decisions are met head-on because you champion the needs and interests of the pupils in your care.



When the inspectors visited Webster in 2011, they found a number of notable strengths within the school. None of these have diminished over the years. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are well supported to grow academically, socially and emotionally and they continue to enjoy all that school has to offer. This is reflected in the above-average attendance rates for all groups of pupils. Respect and tolerance are the cornerstone of your academy, leading to harmonious relationships. It was a joy to observe pupils from different faiths and cultures and with different learning needs working and playing together without any hint of bias or prejudice. New arrivals to the academy make a seamless transition and quickly become part of the Webster 'family'. Everyone is valued at your happy and welcoming school.

In 2011, inspectors judged standards to be low. This is no longer true. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is strengthening each year in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils have a firm foundation on which to secure future success.

Webster is a complex school in many respects because of the high number of pupils who leave and join throughout the year. Many new arrivals come from different countries and typically have little grasp of the English language when they join the academy. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1. Almost half of the pupils in Year 2 did not begin their schooling at Webster. While such pupils settle well and make great strides in their learning, they do not always have enough time to make up for lost ground in the past. This is the main reason why standards at the end of Year 2 do not match those at the end of Year 6. In contrast, those pupils who start in the Nursery and stay the course reach the same standards as their peers nationally.

Inspectors asked you to improve pupils' writing. You have clearly tackled this well. Standards in writing by the end of Year 6 have increased each year. They were above average in 2015 because all pupils made strong progress from their lower than average starting points. Pupils' books show that this is not a one-off. Older pupils are developing as creative and accomplished writers. They have gained the skills and resilience to edit and redraft their work to make it even better. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their writing, there is scope for further improvement, with more opportunities to practise their skills in writing at length.

The academy's new approach to teaching writing is clearly working. Teachers are very skilled in using interesting texts to shape pupils' writing activities. Their careful marking helps pupils to see what they need to do to improve their work.

The parents I met on the playground are full of praise for your work to keep their children safe and promote their enjoyment of learning. Parents' comments on Ofsted's 'Parent View website confirm these positive views.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of very high quality.



Safeguarding pupils is a top priority. The governing body has invested heavily in developing a team of staff with the training, expertise and authority to act as safeguarding leads. The members of this team take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They ensure academy policy and practice meet the latest government guidance for keeping pupils safe. They make sure staff, including those who have just joined the academy, receive up-to-date guidance and training so they are well equipped to spot and report concerns. Other adults, including sports coaches and visiting experts who work with pupils, complete the same training packages. As a result, safeguarding is everyone's business at Webster Primary.

Adults are confident to report any concerns which could indicate pupils are at risk. The highly detailed record-keeping is very effective at tracking this information to pinpoint patterns or more serious concerns. Referrals to social care services are timely and followed up rigorously. The overall safeguarding lead uses the long-established links with a wide range of external services to help resolve any difficulties that families or pupils may be facing. All the necessary checks to vet adults who work with pupils are completed in full.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and free from harmful name-calling and bullying. They are confident that any adult will listen to their concerns and take action to resolve problems. One pupil summed up the views of many very nicely in stating that 'every adult is here to help'. You are also helping pupils to make the right decisions to keep themselves safe. Pupils know the potential dangers associated with the internet and mobile phones and how to mitigate risk. Your sensitive work with older pupils is making sure they know how to avoid peer pressure to do something they know is wrong.

Inspection findings

- Your views of the academy are spot on. None of my inspection findings during the day came as a surprise to you, the governors or the staff. In fact, work is already under way to tackle any shortcomings. This is because you keep a close eye on teaching and pupils' achievement. You are well supported in this work by senior and middle leaders. The responsibility for driving improvement is shared evenly.
- Teachers' skills are constantly refreshed and refined through a wide range of training opportunities. Staff have been supported well in adapting to the new approaches for teaching English and phonics (the sounds that letters make). You make good use of the expertise within classes and beyond the academy to share good practice. A carefully structured programme is helping those teachers who are new to the teaching profession to make an excellent start to their careers.
- You are ably supported in your drive for improvement by members of the governing body. They have helped to shoulder the considerable burdens brought about by recent change. Governors ensure financial resources are targeted to support pupils' achievement through the appointment of skilled teachers and teaching assistants. They offer well-informed challenge because they visit the academy frequently and have a good grasp of data. Governors have an accurate understanding of the academy.



- Teachers abide by whole-school policies and agreed techniques for teaching. All have enthusiastically embraced the new strategies for teaching English. They follow the guidance for marking pupils' work to the letter. Teachers are highly effective in fostering a love of learning through purposeful and interesting activities. The warm relationships they establish go a long way in nurturing pupils' positive attitudes towards school. Pupils speak highly of their teachers. As one pupil commented, 'we learn so much and we can follow our dreams'.
- Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. They give everyone a voice and a chance to share their thoughts and ideas. Classrooms are full of effective prompts to support pupils' learning. Teachers do their very best to encourage pupils to read for pleasure through the broad selection of quality texts they share. However, teachers are not always exploiting the rich potential to develop pupils' writing skills across a range of subjects, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- All groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils from different minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make strong progress. Pupils who attend the resource-base provision flourish academically and socially. There are no marked differences between groups by the time pupils leave Year 6. Disadvantaged pupils thrive. The progress they make exceeds other pupils nationally. They achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than their peers in school and across the country.
- Around two out of every three children who enter the Nursery need extra help with activities they would typically be expected to do at their age. The time children spend in the early years serves them well in many ways. They behave very well, listen attentively, follow instructions and form positive relationships with their classmates. They make good progress in many areas of learning, most notably speaking, listening and their personal and social development. Nonetheless, the proportion of children gaining a good level of development by the end of Reception is below average. This is due to weaknesses in children's reading and writing skills. Consequently, around half are not ready for the demands of Year 1. In particular, boys make slower progress and are on catch-up from the start.
- The teaching of phonics had been a weakness in the past. However, well-trained adults are now using the new teaching approaches very effectively to ensure pupils grasp the sounds that letters make. This is bearing fruit. Even the youngest children confidently have a go at writing using the sounds they know to spell new and common words. Many more children and pupils have the phonics skills usually seen at their age.
- The improvement in pupils' outcomes is clearly a cause for celebration. It shows that you and everyone in the academy have the skills and expertise to strengthen the academy further.
- Your rich curriculum, including the ample opportunities for art and music, gives everyone a chance to excel. Your work on different faiths gives pupils a wide perspective on diversity in the community and beyond. Your official partnership with a national museum enables older children to find out about the impact of hatred towards different groups on the basis of colour, culture or religion. You meet any racial intolerance head-on. Pupils leave your academy well prepared to succeed as learners but also as valuable citizens in modern Britain.



Next steps for the academy

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus on reading and writing in the early years is strengthened further so that more children, particularly boys, are ready to meet the demands of Year 1
- the new strategies for teaching writing are extended to ensure greater opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write at length and to practise their writing skills across other subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the heads of school and the leader for early years. I held discussions with two governors, your external school improvement partner and a group of older boys and girls. I also spoke to a number of pupils of different ages during playtime. We visited classrooms to talk to pupils, observe them at work and to look at their books. We also watched a number of phonics sessions led by different adults. I chatted to a small number of parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the five free-text responses on Parent View plus the five responses from the staff online questionnaire.

I considered a range of academy information including your self-evaluation and your current action plan. I also reviewed the information on the academy website. We discussed your assessments of pupils' progress across the academy. I evaluated safeguarding procedures including your policies to keep children safe, staff training, safeguarding checks on adults who work at and visit the academy and the records you keep of any concerns raised about pupils' safety.



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11 January 2016

Mr Pat Rice
Cedar Mount Academy
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Dear Mr Rice

Special measures monitoring inspection of Cedar Mount Academy

Following my visit with Linda Foley, Ofsted inspector, to your school on 15 and 16 December 2015, 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 which 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 which took place in April 2015.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose

The academy's action plan is not fit for purpose

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



I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the School Improvement Board, and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2015

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables students to achieve well by ensuring that:
 - work set matches the needs and abilities of all groups of students and is adjusted appropriately if they are not making good progress
 - there are consistently high expectations of what students can achieve
 - all students are engaged in their learning at all times and they are making good progress
 - teachers' marking provides students with subject-specific advice to help them to improve their learning and staff require students to respond to the advice
 - questioning is used skilfully and is appropriately challenging to check the understanding of all students in order to ensure good progress
 - opportunities for students to develop their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English are swiftly developed and students have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills effectively across a range of subjects
 - the work of teaching assistants is checked carefully to ensure they are supporting students in making good progress.

- Improve students' behaviour and safety by developing effective practices to:
 - urgently reduce the number of students absent from the academy, including those regularly absent, so their safety is assured and overall attendance across the academy is at least average
 - make sure all students arrive at the academy and to their classes on time
 - eradicate persistent low-level disruption and instances of misbehaviour so that learning improves
 - ensure that all students take pride in their work
 - ensure the academy's procedures for the management of students' behaviour are consistently applied by all staff.

- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
 - ensuring governors meet all of their statutory duties
 - ensuring there are effective programmes for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding that impact well on the behaviour and attitudes of all students
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and improving that which requires improvement



- ensuring continuity of staffing for all students
- developing effective plans for improvement that have sharply focused actions with precise measures of success
- holding teachers and leaders to account through effective performance management
- ensuring that the impact of actions to help disadvantaged students is checked thoroughly to ensure these students are making good progress in all subjects and attend well
- ensuring all leaders, especially subject leaders, focus effectively on the progress and behaviour of all groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs
- making sure all leaders check the quality of teaching accurately and link it securely to students' progress
- ensuring subject leaders take swift action to ensure there is consistent and effective use of academy policies so that students' behaviour and the quality of teaching improve
- developing effectively students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects
- ensuring governors and sponsors hold the academy rigorously to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

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 academy'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 15 and 16 December 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, members of the school improvement board and representatives from the trust. They observed teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 10, focusing on English, mathematics and science, and spoke with teachers following observations. They spent time observing how pupils behaved around the academy during break and lunchtime.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there has been a considerable amount of staff turnover. Eighteen new members of staff joined the academy in September, including new heads of department in English, humanities, physical education, technology and information technology. Senior leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of two new assistant vice principals to lead on behaviour and attendance, and teaching and learning. One vice principal has left the academy.

Outcomes for pupils

The Key Stage 4 outcomes in 2015 were disappointing and below the academy's predictions. For the second year running, this means that the academy has not met the government's current floor standards. The proportion of pupils attaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, and those making expected progress in English, was lower than the previous year. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress in mathematics was higher than in English but it remained below the national figure. The value added scores for mathematics, science, languages and humanities were broadly average.

Senior leaders are now taking a more robust approach to tracking pupils' progress, which they believe provides them with more accurate predictions for the outcomes in 2016. They hold weekly meetings with heads of department, where teachers' assessment information is checked against pupils' work. The Year 11 mock examinations are now being externally marked.

In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' progress was hindered by poor attitudes to learning. This was particularly the case in Year 7 and 10 lessons, where behaviour in some classes was so bad that pupils were making no progress at all.



The recently appointed reading coordinator is developing the new library. Key Stage 3 pupils are responding to her strategies for promoting reading for pleasure, with a steady increase in numbers of those joining the library. Senior leaders are now aware that this must include the facility for pupils to take books home with them if this is to genuinely develop their love of reading.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Across the academy, senior leaders judge a third of the teaching to be good or better, which is an improvement on the situation at the start of the year. Of major concern is that over a third of teachers in the academy, at the time of the inspection, are supply staff. These two statistics mean that pupils have a very slim chance of benefiting from consistently high-quality teaching.

In the majority of the lessons observed during the inspection, too much of teachers' time was taken up with them trying to deal with poor behaviour. As a result, inspectors saw little evidence of teachers challenging pupils to make the best possible progress. An exception to this was in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where the teacher's positive relationship with his pupils created a learning environment in which they were enthusiastic and curious. The teacher was challenging them to tackle more difficult tasks. As one pupil, said, 'this is hard, sir', but his encouraging style meant that they made good progress during the lesson.

The current mixed-ability grouping in Year 7 is detrimental to pupils' progress, particularly the most able. In the lessons observed, the whole class was involved in the same activities, which were not sufficiently challenging for able pupils. Low ability pupils are also not receiving the right amount of support in these classes. Senior leaders have accepted this, and plan to reorganise the groups from January.

The work scrutiny, carried out with a senior leader, showed that most teachers are marking frequently. The quality of written feedback is inconsistent, but some teachers are providing pupils with detailed comments about how to improve. However, when teachers do give this advice, too many pupils do not act on it, or attempt any further challenge tasks which have been set. Of most concern is that when this happens, teachers do not pick this up. It is clear from the presentation and quality of pupils' work that teachers' expectations are not high enough. Some pupils' work represented a deterioration, rather than an improvement, over the term.

Senior leaders have a clear vision for the delivery and assessment of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are following a skills-based curriculum, and new schemes of work have been written to deliver this effectively in all subjects. Senior



leaders are seeking feedback from parents on whether the way pupils' progress is reported to them is clear and helpful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have been ineffective in tackling the issue of poor behaviour. Inspectors' own observations, coupled with staff's and pupils' views, indicate that the behaviour management system is not fit for purpose. A clear discrepancy is evident between the policy, what is being recorded and what is actually happening in the academy.

During break, lunchtime and between lessons, too many pupils do not conduct themselves in a calm and mature manner. During a transition between lessons on the mathematics corridor, the inspector observed behaviour which gave great cause for concern. Despite the high number of staff present, Year 7 pupils were barging into classrooms, shouting and fighting. They were blatantly ignoring the staff who were trying to deal with the situation. Key Stage 3 pupils told inspectors that fights are frequent occurrences, at least once a week, outside at break or lunchtime.

The behaviour during lessons is of equal concern, with some pupils reporting that in all their classes, learning is disrupted. Pupils say that teachers do not use the behaviour management system consistently and when it is used, those who are being disruptive 'don't care'. These views are echoed by teachers, several of whom expressed heartfelt comments to the inspectors about how this worrying situation is affecting their teaching. The bravado that many pupils exhibit, for example boasting about how many detentions they have been given and not attended, is clear proof that the system is not working.

As well as pupils not attending detentions, many of them do not see a period of time in the internal exclusion unit as a serious enough consequence for poor behaviour. Indeed, teachers report that some pupils say they would rather be in there than in lessons. The management of the internal exclusion unit is not a high enough priority for senior leaders. Consequently, it is an ineffective strategy for improving behaviour. The senior leader appointed to lead on behaviour has a clear vision for sustained improvement in this area over time, but there is an urgent need for all leaders to take immediate action to tackle this issue swiftly and decisively.

Actions taken to improve attendance and the number of pupils who are persistently absent are beginning to have impact, but senior leaders are aware that there is still a long way to go in this matter. Pupils who arrive late to the academy must now attend a break-time detention, but leaders know that this will only be effective if non-attendees are tracked rigorously.



The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders are not using their action plan to effectively drive forward improvements at the required rate. The section on impact measures lacks clarity, and some of the points recorded here are simply actions. Senior leaders need a much sharper plan which clearly plots milestones for them to check whether they are as far on the journey of improvement as they need to be. This will help them and the school improvement board to systematically monitor and evaluate their work.

At both a strategic and operational level, senior leaders are not being effective in tackling the worrying issue of very poor behaviour in the academy. This is having a tangible detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers do not feel sufficiently supported by senior leaders in these very challenging circumstances.

The considerable amount of staff turnover means that pupils are not benefiting from consistently high-quality teaching. Senior leaders have taken action to tackle poor performance in teaching and say that the high number of staff on long-term absence is a result of this. Pupils spoken to during the inspection are very concerned about the number of teachers who have left or who are leaving at Christmas. Some Year 11 pupils spoke to the inspectors about how worried they are about how this is affecting them, at this important stage of their education.

The trust's statement of action sets out clearly how they will work with the academy on its journey towards the removal of special measures. The minutes of the monthly school improvement board meetings provide evidence of how they challenge senior and middle leaders. The questions asked and the follow-up actions show that they are focused on the right areas. However, following this monitoring inspection, members of the board now agree that they need to be more proactive in seeing actual evidence of the impact of leaders' actions for themselves.

External support

Specialist leaders in education from the trust's teaching school have provided support in the English, mathematics, science and special educational needs departments. The trust's targeted specialist support team is also supporting individual pupils, groups and providing training for staff.