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26 September 2018

Andrew Landers
Principal
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Dear Mr Landers

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Pegasus Academy

Following my visit to your school on 18 September 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in December 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

I assessed the impact of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, with particular focus on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report.

Meetings were held with the principal, two of the vice-principals, the chief executive officer of Dudley Academies Trust (DAT), the chair of the board of trustees and a member of the local advisory committee. The trust's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including: the school's self-evaluation; minutes of meetings of the board of trustees and the local advisory committee; and information outlining how the school uses additional funding. I also examined the school's single central record, focusing on new staff.

I made short visits to a range of lessons, with one of the vice-principals, and I observed behaviour and spoke to pupils during breaktime and lunchtime.

Context

The senior leadership team changed considerably soon after the last inspection and leadership was restructured in May 2018. The previous principal left the school and the current principal was appointed as interim principal, from within the trust, in January 2018. The deputy principal retired in December 2017. The senior assistant principal has been absent since the last inspection and another assistant headteacher returned to a teaching position in January 2018. To support the interim principal, an assistant principal from within the trust was appointed on a part-time basis and a head of department was seconded to the senior leadership team temporarily.

In May 2018, the interim principal was made substantive principal and the part-time assistant principal was appointed as a vice-principal, job sharing with another vice-principal. In addition, another existing assistant principal was appointed as vice-principal, a new assistant principal joined and an assistant principal left the school.

Since the last inspection, a new head of mathematics and a new head and second in science have been appointed. Other staff have left or been redeployed and three teachers of 'literacy for life' and teachers of English, science and food technology have been appointed.

The local advisory committee was established in June 2018 and the school changed its name from Holly Hall Academy to Pegasus Academy on 1 September 2018.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Members of the relatively new leadership team have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. They have raised expectations and created a positive ethos based on DAT's values: dreaming big; rewarding effort; leading together; respecting each other and the world; and providing learning that inspires. The new curriculum has been designed to promote these values.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are using this knowledge to inform action to improve the school. They have clear priorities and, when new strategies are introduced, they are evaluated in terms of the impact that they have on pupils. Evaluations are now used to modify actions when necessary.

The school's action plan focuses on the key areas that need to improve and builds on the statement of action. The proposed actions are relevant, clear and specific and they are set within logical and appropriate timescales. The people responsible for leading and taking actions are identified, and appropriate monitoring and

evaluation processes and suitable resources are included within the plan. It clearly outlines how parents will be consulted and kept informed about developments.

Trustees took decisive action after the last inspection. They reorganised staffing and recruited new teachers. They continue to provide strategic direction, accountability systems and challenge to leaders. Members of the board of trustees, supported by the local advisory committee, use their extensive skills, knowledge and experience to hold leaders to close account.

DAT also adds capacity to the school by providing behaviour management training for staff, teaching and assessment systems and processes, resources, and a wide range of services. The trust uses established practices to publicise the school and access funding to make improvements to the building.

DAT provides a range of good-quality professional development opportunities for staff at all levels. For example, 'outstanding practitioners', from the trust's central team, coach teachers in the school and model best practice. Leaders and staff use the training that they receive to help them to have a more positive impact on outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have ensured that teachers now plan courses that are logical and develop pupils' knowledge and skills coherently. When teaching is most effective, staff use their excellent subject knowledge and precise questioning techniques to help pupils to think deeply about the topics that they are studying. Staff make good use of the wide range of resources that are available to them, and they give pupils opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and to support the learning of others.

Leaders have introduced an effective system of assessment. Consequently, teachers now have a great deal of accurate information that they can use to plan tasks that are challenging enough to engage pupils with different starting points. However, this is not done consistently. At times, expectations are not high enough, activities are too easy and pupils quietly lose interest. Learning time is not always used well.

Year 11 outcomes improved slightly in 2018. Pupils made better progress in English than they did in many other subjects and outcomes in performing arts were good. However, as a result of the legacy of poor teaching, outcomes were inconsistent. Pupils did not achieve well in science, humanities and, particularly, in mathematics and modern foreign languages.

As a result of better systems and structures and improving teaching, progress improved in every year group last year. Year 7 pupils made the best progress in the school and other pupils were helped to fill gaps in their knowledge. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils made improved progress last year. This led to the difference between the levels of attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils reducing slightly.

Leaders use additional funding more effectively and the impact of pupil premium funding is now measured. However, the external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding, which was recommended at the time of the last inspection, has not taken place.

Attendance is improving, and it is now similar to the national average. Persistent absence has declined significantly, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils now have similar attendance to other pupils.

Leaders have taken effective action to improve behaviour. Permanent exclusions are very rare, and the number of fixed-term and internal exclusions is reducing. Positive behaviour is rewarded, and pupils and staff believe that behaviour is improving.

Pupils feel safe. They think that instances of bullying and the use of prejudicial language have declined and that they are now rare. They are confident that staff would deal quickly and appropriately with any unkindness should it occur.

School leaders, supported by the high-quality chief executive officer, are taking effective action to improve the school. However, systems and structures are not yet fully embedded, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and developments have not yet had a marked impact on outcomes. Leaders now need time to consolidate and develop their strategies further.

Having considered all the evidence, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley

Her Majesty's Inspector