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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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David Littlemore
Headteacher
Prospect School
Cockney Hill
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 4EX

Dear Mr Littlemore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Prospect School

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the new curriculum provides the depth and breadth that leaders intend
- improve the effectiveness of the local governing body (LGB) in holding leaders to

account for improving the school.

Context

Since the last on-site inspection in May 2019, there have been changes to governance. The school joined the King's Group Academies (KGA) multi-academy trust (MAT) in October 2020. The LGB has become a committee of that trust. There is a new chair of the LGB and some change of governors. There has been a staffing re-structure and several teachers will be leaving at the end of this academic year.

Main findings

Since the decision to join the trust, you have worked successfully with MAT officers and your school leadership team to rapidly improve the school. You all know what needs to be done and have identified appropriate priorities and actions.

You have not let the pandemic get in the way of required changes. In fact, you have made the most of the opportunity to pause and re-think school systems and structures. For example, there are new routines to support pupils' behaviour. Pupils told me that behaviour is improved since they have returned from the partial school closures. In lessons I visited, I saw respectful pupils who were keen to join in with activities. Pupils are very pleased to be back at school and attendance is the highest it has been for four years.

Working with the MAT, you recognised that the previous curriculum did not provide the scope or depth of knowledge that pupils need. You have changed the point at which pupils start their GCSE subjects so that they will have enough time to learn the knowledge that they need first. Subject leaders are creating ambitious plans that build on pupils' learning from primary school. These will start in September. You recognise the need to monitor the implementation of these plans and ensure that teachers use them to support pupils to know and remember more.

You and your team have worked with teachers to systematically improve the quality of education. Teachers like leaders' routine lesson visits and the following discussions about their work. Teachers also have benefited from the special educational needs coordinator's work to identify the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To improve consistency of provision, departments have shared useful strategies to best support pupils with SEND.

Your team are introducing whole-school approaches to lessons such as 'retrieval starters'. Some teachers use these strategies effectively to help pupils to remember more and to be able to recall their knowledge. Where this is the case, teachers use the information they gain from these tasks to establish where pupils have missed or

forgotten learning and use this information when planning future lessons.

You have identified reading as a whole-school priority. The weakest readers receive individual support based on their specific needs. For example, some need help with comprehension, others with reading fluency. Across the whole school, you have established a range of activities designed to promote a love of reading. Your evaluation of this work suggests encouraging progress.

Sixth form students have also benefited from your improvements. They now have a rich set of non-qualification learning, including about the world of work. Although Year 13 students have left, all with plans for their destinations, many are still making use of the study centre and teachers' support to develop their knowledge of their chosen degree subjects. Your team also provided support for Year 11 pupils before they left. These pupils had a series of 'bridging' activities to make sure that they are ready for their chosen destinations.

Additional support

You have benefited from the rigorous support and challenge provided by KGA. The executive principal has worked closely with you to re-structure the curriculum and make sure that there is the right subject expertise to deliver this well.

The trust's governance experts have set clear priorities and actions for the LGB. The extensive training and coaching provided by the trust has helped the LGB to become more strategic and communicate more effectively. All recognise that there is more work to do here.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, trust representatives including the chief executive officer (CEO), the chair of the LGB, pupils and teachers to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I toured the school, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work and scrutinised curriculum plans. I considered school improvement plans, minutes from meetings of the governing body and checked the single central register. I considered the views of parents through the 83 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online survey, including 59 written comments. I also took account of the views of staff through conversations and the 83 responses to the online staff survey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the King's Group Academies multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Reading. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector