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25 January 2018

Mr Scott Burnside  
Headteacher  
Chaucer School  
Wordsworth Avenue  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S5 8NH

Dear Mr Burnside

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Chaucer School**

Following my visit with Angela White, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 9–10 January 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in April 2016. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers in mathematics, English, music, humanities, modern foreign languages, physical education and drama.

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

Yours sincerely

Debbie Redshaw  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2016.**

- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - leaders develop an accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
  - improvement plans include sharp and precise outcomes throughout the year so that progress can be measured and leaders at all levels are held accountable for bringing about change
  - leaders at all levels are able to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through linking it closely with the impact it has on pupils' outcomes
  - subject leaders are accurate in judging how well pupils are achieving
  - all teachers follow the school marking and assessment policy so that all pupils are clear about what they need to do next and can act on teacher comments and advice
  - additional funding, including pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, is used effectively to reduce the gaps in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils needing to catch up.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - leaders establish where the best teaching is taking place and share this across the school
  - accurate assessment information is used across all year groups to enable teachers to plan work that fully meets the learning needs of different groups of pupils so that outcomes improve
  - teachers check carefully on the progress pupils are making so that they are clear about any pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings
  - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are closely linked to detailed review of the progress that pupils are making in all subjects
  - all teachers have high expectations for all pupils and only accept work that is presented to a high standard and completed.
- Improve behaviour and safety substantially by:
  - quickly tackling poor behaviour in lessons so that all pupils are able to work without interruption and are supported by teachers who consistently follow the school's behaviour and discipline system
  - further improving attendance and reducing the number of pupils excluded from the school so that they are at least in line with national averages.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 9 January 2018 to 10 January 2018**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, representatives from the local governing board, including the chair, and the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally during lessons and breaktime. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work with school leaders.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, there have been further changes to staffing. The director of mathematics appointed to the trust joined the school in September 2017 and a lead practitioner in mathematics has returned from maternity leave. The head and second in charge in mathematics from Tapton School have provided part-time support for the new director of mathematics for the first term of this academic year. The temporary appointment of the head of science is now permanent. Seven graduates from Teach First and Researchers in Schools have taken up posts.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

School and trust leaders work effectively together to evaluate the quality of education in the school. Through this collaboration, a much improved and more accurate self-evaluation document is in place to assess the school's performance. School leaders have school improvement plans in place which detail and support work to improve the school; however, these are not as precise or sharp as the self-evaluation document.

Leaders continue to develop their evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning by using a variety of evidence to make judgements. Findings from learning walks and work scrutiny, for example, inform staff training. Leaders then check the impact of this training in the next cycle of evaluation. Leaders have pupil progress information and are making more use of this when evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders agree that a closer focus on particular groups, such as vulnerable learners, will help to improve progress for these pupils.

Subject leaders receive support and development from trust subject directors and subject leaders. Through this collaboration, leaders are standardising and moderating pupils' work, which is enabling them to become increasingly confident in the accuracy of pupils' progress information. Trust subject networks are up and running and allowing leaders to learn from one another and share good practice. Through these opportunities, subject leadership of teaching and learning,

curriculum and assessment is strengthening. There is, however, further work to do to strengthen senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers' roles in managing pupils' behaviour and developing pupils' skills for learning alongside continuing to develop the quality of teaching.

Leaders with responsibility for additional funding, particularly for pupil premium and catch-up funding, are now carefully evaluating the impact of the spending on outcomes for these pupils. Where strategies are not successful, they do not continue. Plans for spending this year are appropriate; however, they lack sharpness around specific targets and timescales. In addition, there is little information about how this funding will improve attendance and behaviour for disadvantaged pupils. Funding for pupils who need to catch up in literacy and mathematics is well used and enabling pupils to make progress, and an increasing number are catching up to their peers who have the same starting points.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. Safeguarding training is up to date and there are regular updates for staff throughout the year. Records relating to safeguarding are well recorded and secure. The school works well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils say, and school information shows, that bullying is infrequent and, if it happens, staff deal with it appropriately. Pupils are confident in reporting situations where they feel vulnerable. The school has successfully secured a place to be part of a pilot study to try new ways of supporting the emotional well-being of pupils in the next academic year.

The trust continues to provide high levels of support to the school. As well as the support for middle leaders, senior leaders from across the trust provide support and challenge to senior leaders in the school. The chief executive officer continues to provide challenge to the headteacher through weekly accountability and challenge meetings. Through these meetings, the pace of improvement in most areas is increasing.

Governors are astute and provide rigorous challenge to school leaders. Through a renewed scheme of delegation and committee structure, there is now clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the local governing board. Each committee has specific roles and each committee chair reports to the full board regularly. Governors ensure that they receive information from a variety of sources, including middle leaders. Governors are knowledgeable about the progress that the school is making and they are aware of the work that remains to do.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Pupils' work in books shows clear evidence of teachers' and leaders' increased expectations and standards. Presentation of work is much more consistent across the curriculum, with more pupils taking pride in what they produce. Leaders agree that while this is a much-improved picture, they are not complacent and recognise that maintaining this remains a priority.

Pupils' work and teachers' planning show greater evidence that teachers are becoming better at using pupils' progress information to meet the needs of all learners. Pupils are receiving more challenge and support than they did previously. Teachers access specific information, provided by the special educational needs coordinator, to enable them to scaffold work to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers' use of this information is not as consistent as the use of general progress information.

Leaders are in a stronger position to identify and share good practice within the school. Teachers are encouraged to observe strong performing teachers, and a structured timetable is in place which identifies opportunities for this to happen. Sharing good practice across the trust is also helping to develop the quality of teaching.

Teachers' checks on the progress that pupils make in their books and in lessons is a mixed picture. In some lessons, and in some books, teachers miss opportunities to extend and consolidate pupils' learning. Most teachers follow and apply the school's marking and feedback policy. When pupils respond, this enables them to make more progress. For example, in English, pupils work well with teachers to improve their understanding following assessments so that they learn from their mistakes and improve their skills.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Behaviour incidents, such as persistent low-level disruption and defiance, remain too frequent. This means that poor behaviour frequently disrupts pupils' learning and their ability to make progress and develop effective skills for learning, such as resilience and perseverance. Pupils in key stage 4 report that behaviour is an improving picture, especially when comparing it to when they were in key stage 3. Corridors are calm and pupils use foul language infrequently. Other pupils, however, report that teachers still do not apply the behaviour policy consistently, which means that some teachers do not deal with poor behaviour swiftly enough, allowing further disruption to their learning.

Attendance has not improved over time and absence across 2015 to 2017 remains above the national average. Persistent absence also remains too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and vulnerable groups. Leaders have a full analysis of attendance and are implementing and evaluating new strategies to improve attendance. Some strategies have limited success as pupils improve for a short while and then become persistently absent again. Leaders recognise that they need to explore other strategies and identify the most effective practice to take further action to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

The trust, governors and leaders agree that more urgent action needs to be taken to improve behaviour and attendance. The formation of a core improvement group

for attendance to support improvement has recently been developed but it is too soon to see the impact of this.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Leaders are disappointed with the outcomes achieved by Year 11 pupils in the last academic year. However, these results were much improved from pupils' starting points at the beginning of the year and were accurately predicted. Interventions across the year, to make up for a legacy of poor teaching, had some impact on improving progress but not as much as was needed. Current pupils are in a much stronger position to succeed.

Current pupils' progress information indicates a continually improving picture, which aligns with the improvements in pupils' workbooks. Leaders acknowledge that, while there are improvements, there is still much to do to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve all of which they are capable, particularly pupils who are high prior attaining, disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities.

### **External support**

Where the trust does not have subject expertise, for example in drama, leaders work with staff from other schools to standardise and moderate pupils' work. This ensures that assessments in drama are accurate.