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19 September 2023

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Dear Mr Johnson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Weston Favell Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on Thursday 14 September, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received four successive judgements of requires improvement or inadequate at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, members of the trust executive, including the chief education officer and the vice-chair of trustees, and other staff, actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also reviewed curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke with groups of pupils, met with subject leaders and groups of staff, reviewed samples of pupils' work, reviewed the single central record and the school's safeguarding arrangements and observed social time. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the staff body. The current head of school took up her post in January 2023. A number of new senior and middle leaders have been appointed since the last inspection. Twenty-seven new members of staff started working at the school in September 2023.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and effectively sequenced. Subject leaders and teachers can talk with confidence about how their curriculums set out the increasingly sophisticated knowledge that pupils should learn. Leaders and teachers have worked collaboratively to break down important concepts into manageable and meaningful parts. As a result, teachers know what they should teach and when.

In some subjects, the disciplinary knowledge and skills that pupils need, for example reflecting on changing notions of what has been considered art over time, are clearly embedded in curriculum planning and lessons. In other subjects, there is less of an explicit focus on this complex thinking.

Leaders have shared a model of what teachers can include in their lessons to maximise learning. This helps teachers plan lessons which support most pupils to learn and remember important knowledge. Leaders have established routines for checking pupils' understanding. Teachers share clearly with pupils what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Pupils have the time they need to follow this advice and their work improves as a result. Some teachers use questioning to identify pupils' understanding skilfully and to address misconceptions. Some teachers do not always help pupils to deepen their thinking as effectively as they could.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils and sixth-form students read regularly in lessons and during tutor time. Pupils have library lessons with members of staff who have completed phonics training. These staff use their expertise to provide targeted support to pupils who need extra help. Staff regularly check pupils' ability to read accurately and fluently. Pupils improve their ability to read.

There is a shared ethos across trustees, trust executives and school leaders that is focused on putting pupils at the centre of all school strategies. This is evident in relation to the GCSE options process in which pupils receive personalised advice and the freedom to make intelligent choices about what they want to study. Trust and school leaders undertake checks to identify and address areas for development. For instance, leaders recognised that the mathematics and science departments should share good practice to ensure the consistency of the teaching of mathematical concepts. School leaders access training provided by the trust, such as in relation to curriculum thinking. Staff say that leaders take account of their workload when introducing new policies. They feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

Pupil premium pupils do not attend as well as they could. They are also disproportionately represented in the number of suspensions. However, leaders have introduced a range of

effective strategies to support these pupils. Pupil premium pupils' behaviour and attendance have improved. Further improvement for these pupils remains a priority for the school.

Pupils study a lesson of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) each week during which they learn about how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. Pupils are not yet as secure in their knowledge of fundamental British values and protected characteristics. Year 10 and 11 pupils study religious education during curriculum time allocated to PSHE as well as in assemblies and tutor time. Despite this, some pupils are not aware that they study religious education.

Leaders establish connections with external experts to provide staff with relevant expertise and guidance. Some departments have visited other schools to develop their thinking about curriculum sequencing. Staff have worked with colleagues external to the trust to reflect on assessment systems and teaching strategies. Staff value these opportunities and say they have had a positive impact on their practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Greenwood Academies trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for West Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Fearn-Davies
His Majesty's Inspector