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Mrs Gillian Coffey OBE
Executive Headteacher
Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy
Stoke Road
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Dear Mrs Coffey

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy

Following my visit to your school on 27 June 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 June 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, and groups of staff and pupils. I also met with a governor and two representatives from the Slough and East Berkshire multi-academy trust (SEBMAT). I visited eight lessons with one of your assistant headteachers and observed pupils moving around the site, including at breaktime. I reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks, documents provided by school leaders, and other documents from the school website. These included the school's statement of action, the improvement plan, governors' minutes, the equality and diversity policy, and pupils' performance information.

Context

The substantive headteacher left her post in December 2017, following a period of absence from school. The executive headteacher temporarily assumed the headteacher's responsibilities from the autumn of 2017. A number of other staff

have since either left or joined the school. The chair of governors left his post in summer 2017, and his replacement resigned in April 2018. The current interim chair of governors is a trustee from the Learning Alliance Academy Trust, of which the school is a member. School leaders are working closely with the support of colleagues from Slough and Eton Church of England (CofE) Business and Enterprise College, which is part of the SEBMAT. There is a firm commitment to the two trusts merging in the near future.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders have taken initial action to broaden the curriculum through the introduction of more formal experiences of art, music and design technology. They have appropriate plans in place to make further improvements in September 2018, to give pupils more regular opportunities to learn these subjects across the school. These developments are being supported well by the recruitment of additional specialist teachers in these areas. However, provision for computing will not be as comprehensive as leaders would like in the year ahead. Leaders recognise the importance of providing for pupils with alternative needs. Their useful work with Haybrook College supports this aspect of the curriculum, with a small number of pupils benefiting from participating in accredited courses such as motor mechanics.

Pupils' progress in creative, aesthetic and technological subjects has inevitably been slowed by their limited experience of them in the past. Staff use extra-curricular opportunities creatively to inspire pupils to study these subjects at key stage 4, and to help them to catch up if they do. However, further determined work is needed to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should. Pupils' progress is more rapid in other subjects that they have studied more deeply for a longer period of time. Their progress in English is a particular strength and is accelerating.

Leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching, to make it more consistently effective than in the past. Teachers value the regular feedback they receive about the quality of their work. The school's teaching and learning leaders use this information thoughtfully to identify themes for future training. Staff are encouraged to share their expertise through regular chances to reflect, such as during 'Friday Faculty Focus'. Working closely with the SEBMAT enables staff to access copious and helpful training and support, which is helping to establish useful 'non-negotiable' expectations for every classroom.

In the lessons visited during the inspection, teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes were consistently high. Pupils conducted themselves well and spoke respectfully both to each other and to the adults around them. Teachers now use questioning more effectively than in the past to develop pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. Leaders are working closely with colleagues from Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College to improve teachers' long-term planning, so that learning builds more precisely on pupils' previous success. The special educational needs coordinator provides a helpful source of expertise and

advice to staff in meeting pupils' particular needs. Leaders are exploring how teaching assistants' roles can be enhanced further. Pupils currently lack the resilience to persevere and work independently when difficult tasks push them beyond their comfort zones.

Leaders recognise that improving the overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics has been the greatest challenge this year. Considerable staffing turbulence has impeded the rate of improvement. Staff are supported well by subject experts from the local authority and from Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College. Their medium-term subject planning is becoming more effective as a result. Pupils engage with their learning and experience greater opportunities to apply and use their reasoning skills. Their current lack of confidence and resilience leads them to be overly reliant on encouragement and carefully structured support from their teachers and will require perseverance to overcome.

Staff benefit from useful training that helps to establish consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour as they move from lesson to lesson. Leaders have given careful thought to enhancing supervision arrangements as the number of pupils in the school has increased. Leaders have raised the profile of rewards, although some pupils feel that negative behaviour is still more likely to be recognised than positive choices. Pupils value the work of the 'behaviour teachers', who support other staff in dealing with issues more consistently than in the past. They help pupils to consider wider welfare risks carefully, such as those around child sexual exploitation and gang culture, as well teaching them how to manage conflicts successfully.

Leaders and other staff were surprised about the issues around derogatory language that were identified at the last inspection. They feel this did not typically reflect life in the school. However, they have taken steps to improve how pupils are educated to make positive choices about their behaviour and the way they speak to each other. Leaders have also developed how accurately incidents are logged to help them identify specific issues that need further action. Raising expectations about pupils' behaviour has led to an increase in fixed-term exclusions. Leaders recognise the importance of looking at behaviour and exclusion information in a more precise way, to help them pre-empt possible issues in the future.

Ongoing changes to the leadership of the school have significantly affected the pace of improvement since the last inspection. The original version of the required statement of action was judged as not fit for purpose when it was submitted to Ofsted in September 2017. Leaders did not then respond to the feedback they were given about how to strengthen this plan to accelerate the pace of school improvement. As a result, the statement of action remains not fit for purpose. Leaders' more recent improvement planning, since the school's collaboration with the SEBMAT began, is much more precise. Consequently, leaders now have clear and focused plans to tackle appropriately prioritised improvements to the school. The pace of development has subsequently accelerated in recent months.

Since the last inspection, there have been notable changes in the make-up of the governing body. For this reason, leaders sensibly followed advice to delay commissioning an external review of governance as the school moves towards joining the SEBMAT. At this point, there is no confirmed date for when the school will join the new trust. As such, a further delay in carrying out this review risks governance not improving as rapidly as it needs to. Recent new appointments supported by the SEBMAT have added useful capacity to the governing body. Governors receive useful information from leaders about their work to raise standards in the school. They use it increasingly well to challenge leaders about the difference their work is making, which is supporting the pace of improvement more effectively than in the past. Leaders recognise that streamlining the information they share would help governors to hold them to account even more precisely.

Leaders have taken tentative steps towards addressing weaknesses in the school's arrangements to meet its public sector equality duties. However, their actions are in the relatively early stages. As such, the school does not currently meet this legal responsibility that supports safeguarding arrangements in the school.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

Leaders and governors must urgently ensure that:

- initial work to ensure that the school meets its legal obligations regarding the public sector equality duty is brought to a swift conclusion
- the recommended review of governance is undertaken promptly, to support the development of leadership as the school moves towards being merged into the larger combined multi-academy trust.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles
Her Majesty's Inspector