

Tribal
1–4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 3115319
Direct F 0117 3150430
Direct email: matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

29 June 2012

Mrs Julie Taylor
Principal
Havant Academy
Wakefords Way
Havant
PO9 5JD

Dear Mrs Taylor

Academies initiative: monitoring inspection of Havant Academy

Introduction

Following my visit with Gehane Gordelier, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 27–28 June 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a first monitoring inspection in connection with the academies initiative.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal and other senior staff, middle leaders and groups of students. They also met with the vice-chair of the governing body, a representative of the sponsors and a representative of the local authority.

Context

Havant Academy, sponsored by The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT), opened in September 2010, following the closure of Staunton Community Sports College. The academy provides education for students in Years 7 to 11. Its specialist subjects are English and sport. The academy is using the same buildings as its predecessor school. Many of these buildings are now being significantly rebuilt and refurbished. This work is expected to be completed during November 2012. The academy has very recently achieved membership, unique in England, of an 'Innovative School' programme with a well-known international software company. The academy will

benefit from being a member of a global network of schools developing information and communication technology for learning.

There are currently 440 students on roll. The students are almost all from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is much smaller than seen nationally. The proportions of students being supported by school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs are higher than the national averages. The large majority have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals is above average.

Most of the staff from the predecessor school transferred to the academy. However the first year of operation was challenging and turbulent with regard to staffing and finance because the number of staff was far higher than required in relation to the number of students on roll. There have been some difficulties in recruitment to specific posts. Since September 2011, the academy has been on a more secure footing even though the original sponsors withdrew. TKAT became the sponsors from the beginning of May 2012.

Achievement of students at the academy

Students' standards of attainment on entry to Year 7 in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly below the national average. In 2011 the percentage of Year 11 students achieving five or more higher GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was lower than the national average: the progress made by these students was well below national expectations. Students' current levels of attainment are below average, but the impact of the academy's strategies and provision is beginning to make a positive difference. This is particularly seen in the current Year 11 group, where the academy's data indicate that students' progress is accelerating, leading to predictions that more of them are on course to achieve higher levels in their GCSE English and mathematics examinations than in previous years. As a result, the academy's assessment information suggests it is on track to meet the government's floor standards at the end of Key Stage 4. However, there is more of a mixed picture throughout the rest of the academy. The academy's analysis of recent data indicates that more students than in previous years are beginning to make expected or better progress and higher proportions of them are attaining standards that are in line with those seen nationally. However, senior leaders are aware that most students' progress is not fast enough to gain the ground needed from their very low starting points. This is particularly evident in mathematics and for disabled students and those with special educational needs.

During lessons, inspectors observed students making variable progress across the academy and in their work. Nonetheless there are signs of an improvement. This can be seen in the lessons where students engage with enthusiasm and interest because of the practical nature of the activities and the effective use of information and communication technology by both students and teachers. However, too many

lessons were seen, for example in mathematics, where students' progress was too slow. Often this was because of a lack of clear next steps for their learning, or because support for disabled students and those with special educational needs was not specifically structured to meet their needs.

The quality of teaching

The proportion of lessons that are well taught is increasing steadily. Senior leaders have ensured that there are effective fundamental elements in all lessons. These include a consistent approach to lesson plans, clear learning objectives which are understood by most students and assessment information for individual students available for all teachers. In the better lessons, teachers use the assessment information carefully to provide activities and resources that match students' different needs and abilities. Targets for learning, using GCSE grades and National Curriculum levels, are regularly referred to by both teachers and students throughout lessons to promote better progress and students' understanding of what they need to do to attain higher grades. In a few lessons seen, for example a Year 8 design and technology class, students were accurately assessing their own and others' work. Teachers provide pacy lessons, with opportunities for students to collaborate well in pairs and groups. This enables effective promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The opportunities for discussion also result in the effective development of students' language and communication skills. Skilful questioning and the use of technology enable students to see good examples of editing text and explanations of mathematical calculations modelled by teachers and, in some cases, their peers.

In the lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers' explanations and instructions are too long. This reduces the amount of time students have for learning and practising their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Although assessment information is used as the basis for an overall objective for each lesson, it is not refined enough to inform activities that match the different needs and abilities of the students. As a result, students find the work either too easy or too hard and their learning slows down. The use of verbal feedback from teachers during lessons is not frequent enough to support students in their understanding of what they need to do to improve. Consequently, they are not able to make the progress of which they are capable.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Concerns about students' behaviour and its management by the academy were communicated to inspectors anonymously. These concerns were thoroughly investigated. With the open and compliant support of senior leaders, inspectors scrutinised the academy's policies and records of incidents. They held a variety of discussions with different groups of students and staff, both individually and in groups. Students' behaviour was observed around the site and in lessons through regular focused visits to classes and to different areas of the academy throughout the time of the inspection. As a result of these activities, inspectors concluded that a

small number of students in most year groups sometimes display challenging behaviour. Overall, this is handled appropriately by the academy, although there are inconsistencies in the ways in which a few teachers manage disruptions. Exclusions and incidents are reducing over time and the general atmosphere around the academy and in the majority of lessons is calm and purposeful.

One of the anonymous concerns was about the academy allegedly excluding students prior to the monitoring inspection in order to provide a better picture of behaviour. Inspectors were satisfied that the reasons behind the very small number of fixed-term exclusions of students were genuine. However, the systems for monitoring and analysing the records of behaviour incidents are insufficiently robust. As a result, the academy is not always able to provide a precise evaluation of its impact in terms of reducing incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Students who spoke to inspectors said that behaviour is better in the lessons where teachers provide stimulating and engaging activities, in addition to fostering positive working relationships with their classes. Most students told inspectors that they felt safe most of the time, but a few of the students said that they were occasionally concerned that there were a small number of physical incidents that were not always tackled effectively by staff. Senior leaders are aware of this and are implementing strategies to ensure staff deal with challenging events more consistently. The academy is developing effective strategies to encourage families and students to take regular attendance more seriously. Consequently, although below average, attendance is improving steadily over time.

The quality of leadership and management of the academy

Following the opening of the academy, there was a range of financial, staffing and sponsorship challenges which required resilience and tenacity to resolve. As a result of the Principal's steadfastness, and with the effective support of the vice-principal and a small number of senior leaders, the academy commenced its second year on an even keel. The academy's senior management structure is appropriate and middle managers are developing into their roles with enthusiasm and understanding. The systems and procedures for tracking students' achievement and targeting support to those who need it are becoming established. This is particularly evident in the accelerated progress students have made in Year 11. However, some systems for tracking and evaluating the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs are underdeveloped because of staff absence.

The senior leadership team has a clear view of what the academy needs to do to improve further. Straightforward and direct strategic plans, with challenging targets for improvement, are based on accurate and candid self-evaluation. Information is collected frequently to inform leaders and managers of the academy's performance with regard to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Most staff are clear about the direction and purpose of the academy. Senior leaders and managers have been robust in ensuring staff are held to account for students' progress and behaviour. Effective professional development and, where appropriate, formal

procedures have ensured that the proportion of well-taught lessons is increasing steadily. A few of the students who spoke to inspectors felt that their relationships with staff were not as positive as they had been in the past but acknowledged they were achieving more as a result of the increasing proportion of better lessons. Many were looking forward to the new facilities that will be opening during the autumn of 2012.

Clear lines of accountability exist between the governing body and staff. Regular meetings and visits from link governors ensure that there is close monitoring of the academy's performance. Recently, this accountability has been embedded even further as a result of the partnership with the new sponsors. Ambitious targets for improvement have been agreed with TKAT, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and rates of progress for all students.

The notable improvements in achievement and quality of teaching over a relatively short period of time, accurate and rigorous self-evaluation, and the committed senior leadership and management team have ensured that the academy is well placed to continue to improve.

External support

The academy has benefited from the support initially provided by the local authority, independent inspection and advice teams and a strong federation of local schools. In addition, the academy is receiving challenge, support and effective advice from the new sponsors. As a result, plans and resources for further improvement are well grounded.

Main Judgements

The academy has made satisfactory progress towards raising standards.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise achievement in all subjects, and particularly mathematics, in order to meet or exceed the academy's targets.
- Develop clear and consistent assessment strategies to be used by all teachers during lessons to improve students' progress.
- Increase further the rates of attendance so they are at least in line with the national average.
- Establish consistent and systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs and recording behaviour incidents.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector