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Jeremy Newnham
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Dear Mr Newnham

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Caistor Yarborough Academy

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your academy on 3 October 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the students, the Chair of the Governing Body, and colleagues from the academy who contributed.

There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection in February 2012. Five teaching staff have left and eight new staff have been appointed, including a new head of mathematics.

As a result of the inspection on 1 February 2012, the academy was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

On entry to the academy, students' attainment is well below average. In 2011, attainment at the end of Year 11 remained broadly average in most measures. However, the percentage of students who gained five A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE fell very slightly remaining at below average levels. Unvalidated results for 2012 show a modest increase in attainment. The academy exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. While improved rates of progress are not clearly evident in the tracking data for the current year, observations during the inspection and the academy's own records confirm the view that the progress that students make in lessons has considerably improved since the last inspection.

The academy now has effective tracking systems which quickly identify any student at risk of underperforming. Carefully tailored interventions are then put in place. Where previously only those students at risk of not achieving a grade C were targeted, current practice is that all students at risk of not reaching their target grades receive additional support. This means that more students, and particularly those of higher abilities, make more progress currently than in the past. The latest in-school tracking data indicate that most students are making at least the expected progress. The rate of progress accelerates as students move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 as their basic skills improve. The academy has used pupil premium funding to increase student access to laptops, tablets and electronic book readers as well as to provide one-to-one tuition and additional classes.

Much has been done to improve students' behaviour and tackle disruption in lessons. A revised behaviour for learning policy was launched following consultation with staff, parents, carers and students. There are clear systems to reward positive behaviour and consequences for those who do not comply. The policy states that staff have the responsibility to plan and deliver relevant and interesting lessons and students should come to lessons prepared to learn. All staff are effective in ensuring that students understand the academy's ethos and expectations. The result of these new arrangements has meant that there has been a significant reduction in lessons which are disrupted by low-level misbehaviour. Furthermore, students are taking more responsibility for their own learning; they arrive to lessons punctually, are equipped and are keen to learn. Students with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties receive structured support from the emotional support service team based at the academy, as well as from student counselling. Students say they feel safe in school, and that occurrences of bullying are decreasing and are dealt with promptly. Academy monitoring records show that the number of rewards has increased and negative behaviours have decreased, while exclusions have greatly decreased. Observations during the inspection confirm that behaviour has improved in lessons and around the school. Questionnaire responses from parents, carers and students carried out in May 2012, and conversations with students during the inspection, indicate that while improvements are indeed underway, good behaviour is not yet universal.

Lessons observed during the inspection were at least good and students made good progress. This is because the academy has taken effective action in identifying and tackling weaker aspects of teaching. The academy has set out its expectations for good teaching through published guidelines that have been reinforced through training opportunities and the sharing of good practice. Expectations of progress have been clarified and teachers now aim to meet targets set using measurable and objective criteria. Teachers' planning has also improved and lessons are usually well-structured and challenging. Teachers share clear learning objectives with students and review students' progress regularly throughout the lesson. The academy's use of four key learning skills: team, reflective, independent and creative (abbreviated to TRICS), has led to a much greater focus on collaborative working. Students respond positively to their lessons. They are now more engaged because lessons interest and

challenge them more. Because these improvements in teaching and learning are very recent, it is too soon to see them reflected in improved GCSE results for 2012.

Opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are planned for and often well developed in lessons. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, students challenged their own and others' moral beliefs by analysing key characters in *Of Mice and Men*. The impact was such that one student remarked, 'I have never been able to look deeper into myself, but now I can.' In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, students developed a deeper understanding of key cultural differences between England, France and Spain through their own investigations.

The academy has developed monitoring systems that identify priority areas for development and these are linked to the academy improvement plan. Monitoring is mainly carried out by senior leaders, who make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. These systems have had an immediate impact on teaching and learning by enabling the academy to provide well-focused training and coaching that are linked to the identified needs of teachers. The academy is implementing a greater variety of approaches to improving teaching that better meet the needs of students. The improvement seen in lessons is evidence of the increasing effectiveness of how the academy manages teaching and learning.

Following advice from Ofsted, amendments to the statement of action have been made. The plan now identifies who will monitor the progress against the specified actions taken and who will evaluate the impact. As such, the action plan is now fit for purpose. However, there is little evidence that the governing body has carried out such evaluations when required to do so. Furthermore, in some cases, the success criteria identified are not measurable or quantifiable and, as such, make it more difficult to monitor the progress that the academy is making in addressing its priority areas for development. While the governing body has received additional training and has developed its committee structure, it does not provide enough challenge or effectively hold the academy to account for its performance or evaluate the impact of improvements on students' progress. Safeguarding procedures at the time of the inspection meet current government requirements.

The academy invests in securing external views of the school to ensure it can improve further. A partnership with a local Leading Edge school has provided support in staff training and in developing the roles of heads of department. Another partner school has provided useful support to securing improvements in mathematics. Staff from these schools have also been used to support the accuracy of the monitoring of teaching and of assessments.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your academy. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Improve students' behaviour so that disruption in lessons is reduced by:
 - reviewing the academy's behaviour management strategy and including a renewed focus on the links between the quality of teaching and behaviour
 - ensuring consistent application of the academy's behaviour management strategy by all staff.

- Improve teaching so that 75% is good or better by December 2012 by:
 - setting out for all teachers the academy's expectations of good teaching and the progress students should make
 - ensuring teachers plan challenging activities that meet the individual needs of all students
 - supporting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all subjects of the curriculum.

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - using the analysis of assessment data more frequently to identify where classes, subjects and groups of students are at risk of underperforming
 - using the academy's self-evaluation process to support its improvement planning more effectively, recognising and focusing clearly on the academy's main priorities
 - ensuring the governing body is more rigorous in holding the academy to account for the behaviour, progress and attainment of students.