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1 March 2013

Mr W E Jordon CBE  
Executive Principal  
North Shore Academy  
Junction Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
Cleveland  
TS19 9LT

Dear Mr Jordon

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of North Shore Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 February 2013, 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 the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Up to a total of three Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State and the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director Children Education and Social Care for Stockton-on-Tees.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Briggs  
Lead Inspector

January 2012



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012**

- Improve students' behaviour and the impact this has on learning by:
  - enabling teachers to take a consistent and suitably robust approach to improving discipline
  - introducing an effective strategy for behaviour management
  - ensuring that the work of the internal exclusion unit has a successful and sustained impact on students' attitudes to learning.
  
- Improve students' attendance by:
  - analysing the reasons for poor attendance and evaluating whether academy policies are being implemented robustly
  - analysing students' views about their enjoyment and engagement in lessons and the impact of their experiences on attendance and punctuality
  - taking more robust action to ensure persistent absence is reduced.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - building upon the successful curriculum initiatives in Key Stage 3 to enable more students to enjoy lessons
  - giving teachers more time to share good practice
  - ensuring that teachers plan and deliver learning activities effectively so that they meet the needs and interests of different groups of students, especially those who have specific weaknesses in their literacy skills
  - further reducing the proportion of lessons taught by supply or temporary staff.
  
- Develop the academy's capacity to improve by:
  - ensuring that the governing body and trustees challenge the performance of leaders more robustly
  - establishing a more cohesive and effective leadership team with clearly identified roles, responsibilities and performance targets that have direct links to outcomes for students
  - building upon the improvements made to the quality of middle leadership to devise a more effective curriculum at Key Stage 4
  - identifying a new lead trustee so that the long-term future of the academy is assured.

## **Special measures: monitoring of North Shore Academy**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 27 and 28 February 2013**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, vice-principal, the Chair of the Governing Body along with two other governors, a representative of the academy sponsor, the achievement partner and other key staff. Formal and informal discussions were also held with students. A total of 28 lessons were visited for a short period of time; some observations were conducted jointly with the vice-principal.

The academy's records for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff were also scrutinised and checked that the academy is meeting statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been further changes to the staffing of the academy. There continues to be a planned reduction in the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Two subject leaders have relinquished their roles. A new science teacher has been appointed along with a range of temporary appointments including cover for a maternity leave. Consultation regarding a proposed staffing restructure is currently being undertaken. The academy is expected to move into new purpose-built premises in April.

#### **Achievement of students at the academy**

This aspect was not a focus of this inspection. Academy data continue to suggest that there will be an increase in the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2013. Data also show that more students are predicted to make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics. However, outcomes are almost certain to be below national figures and the proportion of students making more than expected progress is likely to be exceptionally low.

Students' achievement in the lessons seen continues to improve. Teachers are getting better at focusing on students' progress and checking how well they are doing. Nonetheless, there remains too much inconsistency in students' progress as it depends entirely on which teacher they get. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making better progress in lessons as a result of more targeted support. All subjects are focusing on improving students' literacy skills but this is still an area requiring further work.

## **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching continues to improve as a result of the support plans in place for teachers, but there are still some inconsistencies. A particular focus of this inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the support given to teachers who have struggled in the past to consistently deliver lessons of an appropriate standard. As a result of the targeted support from the vice-principal and her teaching and learning team combined with some high quality external consultant support, many teachers are raising their game. Lesson planning is improving because it is more sharply focused on students' progress and less so on what tasks they are required to do. More teachers understand what a good lesson looks like and are better equipped to teach one. However, this is not consistent enough to ensure all students learn as well as they should in every lesson.

The proportion of inadequate teaching continues to reduce. Leaders are aware that the pace of this needs to increase. Teaching that requires improvement to ensure it is securely good is being targeted and there are signs that improvements are taking place. A good number of teachers, including subject leaders, are on support programmes to help them improve the quality of their work. In an increasing number of cases this is working well and resulting in teachers becoming more effective. However, a few teachers are either not responding quickly enough to the support they receive or are not part of the programme. Consequently, a small proportion of the teaching that caused concern on the last monitoring inspection remains.

Sharing of good practice is now an established strategy for improvement and teachers are happy to be observed by colleagues. Staff, including teaching assistants, are getting more opportunities to hone their skills through a variety of bespoke training sessions. Students spoken with say that lessons are more fun and that they learn more. However, some say that the work they are given can be too easy at times and inspection evidence confirms this view.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching – good

## **Behaviour and safety of students**

Although this aspect was not a focus of this monitoring inspection, students' behaviour in lessons was observed and was, on the whole, slightly better than at the time of the December monitoring inspection. As previously, students' attitudes to learning depend very much on the quality of teaching they receive. There are fewer reluctant learners because teachers are better at making their lessons more interesting and enjoyable. Students are faced with a wider range of activities within a lesson and this is helping to keep them motivated and focused on learning. Nonetheless, students do not always listen well and a few are prone to off-task chatter and occasional boisterousness when the teacher allows it to happen. Leaders affirm that attendance continues to improve.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Leadership at all levels is becoming more cohesive and effective. Senior leaders have very high expectations of staff and have taken some tough decisions regarding improving the quality of teaching and leadership and these are beginning to bear fruit. Staff say that morale is higher now and this is reflected in the significantly reduced staff absence figures. The management of the move to the new building is being skilfully undertaken with the minimum disruption to learning.

Decisive action to improve the quality of middle leaders has been taken since the last monitoring inspection. As a result of new initiatives, such as weekly meetings for 'leaders of learning', middle leaders are more confident in holding their staff to account. They are working together more effectively and have a more holistic view of the progress students are making across the academy. They have a better view of the quality of teaching within their subjects and know that the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better remains much too low. Plans are in place to ensure that middle leaders model the best quality of teaching but it is too early for sufficient impact to be seen.

Teachers new to the profession say that the support they receive is of high quality and enables them to develop their craft well. They believe that the support provided by the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) mentor is invaluable and is resulting in them improving their classroom skills significantly. This support, combined with other expertise from within the academy chain is sufficient to provide the necessary support to a small number of NQTs if required.

The governing body is growing from strength to strength. Governors continue to increase their challenge and support of senior leaders. They have a reasonable view of how well the academy is doing, but are not ensuring the necessary improvements to the quality of teaching and middle leadership are carried out as fast as is needed.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Develop the academy's capacity to improve – satisfactory

### **External support**

The support provided by Northern Education Trust continues to be appropriately targeted and is having a positive impact on many areas of the academy's work. Subject consultants are held in high regard by departmental leaders and the expert consultant support for monitoring the quality of teaching is paying dividends.