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10 May 2013

Mr Jed Donnelly
Executive Headteacher
Greenfield Academy
Drake Lane
Barton
Dursley
GL11 5HD

Dear Mr Donnelly

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Greenfield Academy

Following my visit with Andrew Redpath, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 8 and 9 May 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 a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, reviewed documents and met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and a representative from the academy sponsor, who also chairs the interim governance and management group. Inspectors observed 15 lessons, with seven observed alongside school leaders. They attended an assembly and contacted parents and carers. A visit was made to the off-site Key Stage 4 tuition centre. Students were spoken to and their work was scrutinised.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all students.

Context

Greenfield Academy shares a site with Peak Academy. All students attending either academy have a statement of special educational needs due to behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Students and staff from both academies share the same leadership and are completely integrated across the school.

There are currently 51 students enrolled at Greenfield Academy. All Key Stage 4 students undertake courses at a variety of alternative providers. Some of them receive additional literacy and numeracy support, taught by staff from the Academy at an off-site centre. The proportion of students who are eligible for support through the additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is above that found nationally. The pupil premium is to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families. Most students at the academy are from a White British background and a few speak English as an additional language.

Leadership arrangements have been made in partnership with another successful special school within the academy chain and will stay in place until at least August 2014. The current leaders took up their roles in November 2012. Since the monitoring inspection of Peak Academy in March 2013, a special educational needs coordinator and a teacher of information and communication technology have taken up teaching posts.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

Many students start at the academy with very low levels of achievement and rates of progress have been poor. School leaders have begun to address this by accurately identifying students' starting points and improving systems for monitoring progress. For Key Stage 3 students, this takes the form of regular teacher assessments and the setting of appropriate learning targets for students to work towards. Targets now take account of national progression guidance. Although many gaps in learning still remain, rates of progress are becoming more rapid. Leaders are aware that teachers need to assess progress more accurately and have therefore planned for them to work with another school to moderate standards of achievement. There are better systems in place for monitoring the progress of Key Stage 4 students, who are taught by alternative education providers. When inadequate progress is being made, academy leaders review the placement and make further changes if needed. All students now receive literacy and numeracy tuition, and most will be entered for appropriate examinations in English and mathematics this year. Leaders have correctly identified that further improvements are required to ensure that older students are taught a broader range of subjects that lead to recognised accreditation.

The quality of teaching

In the best lessons, teachers provide appropriate activities that are pitched at the correct level, capture students' interest and give clear explanations of what they are expected to learn. They recognise the individual needs of students, including their low levels of literacy and poor communication skills. These needs are then addressed by setting precise learning targets and monitoring progress against them. Students are aware of what they need to do next to improve and are encouraged to work independently. There is inconsistency across subjects, and some teaching fails to engage students and limits their progress. In less effective lessons, teachers do not insist on high enough standards of behaviour, are accepting of work that is poorly completed and allow students to rely on the support of adults too frequently. Not all teachers plan lessons which promote good social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

Academy leaders are acutely aware that the quality of teaching still requires significant improvement. Some leaders' judgements are occasionally too generous when observing the standard of teaching, although they have an accurate understanding of teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Programmes of support and wider training opportunities have been provided for academy staff. These have included whole-staff training in de-escalating poor behaviour and in improving standards of literacy. These professional development opportunities are having an impact but leaders are not complacent and recognise that more needs to be done to reduce the amount of inadequate teaching that still exists.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Members of staff say that they feel more confident in addressing poor behaviour and that there is a consistent approach to behaviour management by staff across the academy. Behaviour continues to improve, although there are still occasions when learning is interrupted because of inappropriate actions by a minority of students. Incidents of poor behaviour are logged and tracked appropriately. Students are now expected to be in lessons promptly and most engage with learning when there. When disruptions do occur and students leave lessons, there is an effective system that allows them to re-engage with learning as quickly as possible. Relationships between staff and students are increasingly positive and students say that they know where to get support if they need it. The student council members feel that they are listened to and have helped make decisions about the new uniform, changes to the building and the quality of food at lunchtime. Although students appreciate the new rewards system and individual achievements are recognised in the daily rewards assembly, rewards need to link more closely to specific targets that have been set. In some lessons, unacceptable behaviour is not challenged quickly enough by teachers because they use language that is too conciliatory. When the consequences of poor behaviour are not made clear enough, lessons continue to be disrupted and little learning takes place.

Academy leaders and staff have recognised that more needs to be done to improve students' social awareness and a restorative justice programme is planned. The number of temporary exclusions has reduced since September but remains high. A new inclusion room is planned, which will allow students to work under supervision rather than be sent home. Attendance levels have shown some improvement since the beginning of the year but some Key Stage 4 students fail to attend their courses regularly. This is now tracked carefully and engagement levels are slowly starting to improve. The academy has appropriate systems in place for keeping students safe.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The academy is benefiting from a stable and consistent leadership team that is clearly focused on the further improvements that need to be made. Team members regularly review and evaluate the impact of all new initiatives. Improvements in the curriculum offer for Key Stage 4 students are planned to raise levels of achievement and improve students' engagement and attendance. Academy leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching carefully and have accurately identified where additional support is required. Performance management systems are now in place and teachers are held increasingly to account using the national teaching standards. Teachers' performance targets for the current year not linked closely enough to improvements in achievement. The appointment of a special educational needs coordinator has improved the capacity of middle leaders to make more of a contribution to teaching and pastoral improvements. Governance remains the responsibility of the sponsor but additional board members have been appointed and local governance arrangements are planned to be in place ready for the new academic year. The existing management board receives detailed reports from leaders and holds them to account for improving all students' outcomes.

External support

The academy continues to access support from The Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), which has assisted with professional training, interim governance and leadership arrangements. It has also helped with the recruitment of staff, including arranging a secondment of a senior leader from another AET academy to improve teaching in mathematics. Closer links with alternative providers of education have been developed. There are still unreasonable delays when arranging transport for students, despite academy leaders raising their concerns with local authority representatives.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase rates of progress in all lessons by recognising the literacy and communication needs of

individuals, planning high-quality activities that help to develop these skills and encouraging students to work more independently.

- Raise expectations and manage classroom behaviour more effectively by closely linking consequences and rewards, and insisting on appropriate standards of courtesy from students.
- Improve attendance and reduce the number of temporary exclusions by providing more opportunities for students to work on-site under the supervision of school staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox

Her Majesty's Inspector