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2 July 2013

Ms Ruth Johnson  
Principal  
Sarum Academy  
Westwood Road  
Salisbury  
SP2 9HS

Dear Ms Johnson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sarum Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 2 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, with the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives from two different sponsors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The academy action plan was evaluated and the analysis of current student tracking data of the quality of teaching was discussed.

### **Context**

Since the February inspection, and following a review of governance, the governing body has changed its committee structures. The school is currently planning for significant changes in senior leadership and for moving into the new school buildings in September.

### **Main findings**

- The improvements noted in the February inspection report have been enhanced as a result of the actions taken by the academy's senior leaders. The effectiveness of all actions is monitored and evaluated through the impact on improving students' progress and achievement, and against clear and challenging targets.
- The academy's student tracking data, judged to be accurate in the inspection report, indicates that achievement has improved since the inspection with more students making at least the progress expected. The gaps in performance between, for example boys and girls and between those students eligible for support from the pupil premium and other students, are closing.
- The quality of teaching has improved and more is at least good and more outstanding. The professional development provided for all teachers has improved consistency in, for example, the marking of students' work, providing them with good quality feedback and ensuring that they respond to improve further. Teachers also now make use of a wider range of teaching and learning activities. All teachers have individual action plans and some have additional well-targeted support and training.
- Senior leaders' discussions with students indicate that improvements in teaching, and students' greater enjoyment of learning, have contributed to the continuing improvement in students' attendance.
- Students have been involved well in determining what good learning looks like to develop a clear set of values that have sustained improvements in their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons. Senior leaders fully realise the importance of this is making best use of the new buildings and facilities from September.
- Achievement in the sixth form is also improving and numbers for next year are set to rise sharply. Careful consideration has been given to progression from the curriculum pathways offered to students in Key Stage 4 onto appropriate and challenging courses in the sixth form.
- As a result of a review of governance, the governing body has altered its committee structure to enable it to more closely monitor progress against the improvement points in the February inspection report. A key development is the formation of a curriculum and standards committee that includes governors, representatives from sponsors who have an educational background, and the academy senior leadership team. This group focuses relentlessly on monitoring academy improvement and is effective in holding senior leaders to account.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the impact of each of the points in the action plan is monitored to determine those that are most effective
- put in place the governing body's embryonic plans for holding middle leaders to account.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

There is close liaison between the academy, the governing body, the diocese, the local authority and the other sponsors – Bath Spa University and Bryanston School. This enables the academy to draw upon a wide range of expertise as well as offering high levels of challenge for senior leaders. The principal particularly values the support from Bath Spa University. This external support is helping senior leaders secure a good rate of improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Church of England Salisbury Diocese, the Education Funding Agency and the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

**Her Majesty's Inspector**