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Mr Gareth Jones
Ormiston Enterprise Academy
Bennerley Avenue
Ilkeston
DE7 8PF

Dear Mr Jones

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ormiston Enterprise Academy

Following my visit with David Martin, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 3–4 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

This visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2013. 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.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Ormiston Academy Trust.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2013

- Improve teaching to at least a good quality so that standards in all subjects rise to average or higher by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students of all abilities can achieve
 - making sure that students of all abilities receive work that not only meets their needs but is challenging
 - motivating students with lessons that are much more interesting so that they develop a more positive attitude to learning
 - improving marking so that the advice offered is more helpful.

- Improve literacy and numeracy far more effectively across all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers and heads of subjects take full responsibility for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills within their lessons
 - promoting the pleasure of reading across the academy
 - improving questioning and discussions in class so that students get better opportunities to develop their vocabulary and speaking skills.

- Strengthen the leadership and governance of the academy by:
 - ensuring that governors rigorously hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning
 - making the procedures for leading the improvements in teaching much more effective
 - providing better training for leaders at all levels so that they can carry out their responsibilities more effectively and then can be held to account for teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 3–4 July 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and observed lessons and other activities. Meetings were held with teachers, middle and senior leaders, the academy's Acting Principal and the Principal Designate, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff from the Ormiston Academy Trust who are supporting the academy. A meeting was held with a group of students from Years 7 to 10 and the academy's self-evaluation was analysed.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection visit, one teacher left the academy at Easter and one member of the governing body has resigned.

The plans for merging this academy with Ormiston Ilkeston Academy have progressed further since the last monitoring visit. All staff have now been either offered new posts, are moving on to other schools or have accepted voluntary redundancy. It is proposed that from September and for one year only, students in Years 8, 9 and 11 will remain on the Enterprise site, while the new Year 7 and all Year 10 students will be based at the Ilkeston site. In September 2014, it is planned that all students will be based at the Ilkeston site.

The Acting Principal will return to his substantive post at the end of this term, at which point the Principal Designate takes charge of the whole academy. A senior member of staff will have specific responsibility for the Enterprise site and students during next year.

Achievement of pupils at the school

There is very convincing evidence that the achievement of students who have sat GCSE examinations in 2013 will be considerably better than in 2012. Clear direction from the Acting Principal, and rapid action to improve behaviour and academy routines following the January 2013 inspection, have resulted in a much more consistent experience for students across the school. Attainment in English and mathematics from early entry in these subjects is already equal to or above that of 2012. Robust internal assessment indicates that the proportions of students achieving key benchmarks, such as five or more subjects at GCSE including English and mathematics, should nearly double. The improvement in outcomes has been most marked for middle- and higher-ability students, and is better for girls than boys. Students eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs are also expected to improve, but not by as large a margin as the majority. This means that, despite overall improvement, the gaps in performance between groups of students may grow larger in 2013 than 2012.

The improvements in achievement have mostly been made since January 2013, and are in a context where many students are held back by low levels of literacy and many years of underachievement. In a recent assessment of reading ages, over three quarters of students in Years 7 to 9 were found to have reading ages that are below their chronological age. In some cases, they lag as much as six years behind. Many students also have undeveloped writing skills, with handwriting that shows poor letter formation and an inability to produce joined-up letters. The academy has taken recent action to begin to address this. There is a much greater focus on literacy skills in all subjects, including strategies to promote better writing and speaking skills. Additional literacy teaching has been included in form-tutor time and a new reading scheme has been introduced. While initial indications are that these are positive moves, it is too soon to assess their medium- and long-term impact on examination outcomes.

In most lessons observed by inspectors, students made reasonable progress. The recently introduced presentation policy is helping to improve the appearance of students' work and to generate a greater degree of pride and care. Most students are keen to learn and do well, and the academy has provided a range of very effective measures to check very regularly on their progress. Students know their current level of attainment and their target. They can also discuss whether or not they are on track to achieve or exceed their target.

The quality of teaching

There have been some very significant improvements in the quality of teaching at the academy since January 2013. The majority of lessons observed by inspectors this time were good or better, and none were inadequate. These judgements closely match the academy's own assessment of teaching quality. This improvement is because of very strong leadership and effective guidance, so that all teachers know what they need to do to improve students' progress and establish consistent standards. It is now almost universal that lessons are planned to allow for a range of prior attainment and ability. Thought is invested into providing more interesting and stimulating learning in lessons. This often means that students spend very little time listening to the teacher, and therefore have more to participate in activities and complete their work. Most teachers are now better skilled at providing opportunities for students to talk about their learning and at asking questions that deepen understanding. It is, however, still quite early in the implementation of these better approaches, and the level of skill with which teachers apply improved techniques, is quite variable. In some cases observed, teachers were more focused on ensuring that they included what they considered to be all the elements of a good lesson rather than students' progress. By contrast, in some better lessons observed, teachers were confident enough to change their planning and approach in the light of how well the students were making progress.

Teachers who have made the most significant improvement in their practice are those who have engaged most positively in the improvement programmes offered by the Acting Principal and senior leaders. Where individuals have been most open to being observed and observing others, discussing their findings and collaborating on planning, some dramatic progress has been made. In other cases, teachers have been reluctant to engage in this level of professional dialogue, and these teachers have improved the least.

Most lessons are characterised by very positive relationships between students and teachers. Students say that this has been helped by the 'respect agenda' introduced in the spring term and by the regular presence of leaders around the academy promoting positive behaviour.

Many teaching assistants are highly skilled and experienced, and able to offer effective support to students in their learning. Their skills at questioning and prompting students have also improved, and this has helped to develop the independence and resilience of students with special educational needs.

The academy has provided an intensive programme of intervention and support to students in Year 11 during the year, and has used the pupil premium funding creatively to support eligible students. Regular 'raising attainment and progress' meetings enable staff to discuss individual students and target a consistent approach towards any who are falling behind.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There have been very significant improvements in all aspects of behaviour and safety since the academy was placed in special measures. Attendance has improved and the proportion of students with persistent absence has dropped by almost two thirds. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced from 396 in 2011/12 to just 69 in the current academic year. The number of students temporarily removed from lessons due to poor behaviour has reduced significantly across the year, and dropped quite dramatically in the latter part of this year following the introduction of regular 'patrols' by middle and senior leaders. These tours of the academy, covering every lesson of every day, have helped to promote a calm and studious atmosphere. They have been appreciated by students, staff and by the leaders who have undertaken them.

Staff and students have also responded well to the regular and consistent presence of the Acting Principal on and around the site, and in lessons. Many students in the academy are initially uneasy with strangers and respond much more positively to adults that they know. Students spoken to described how they believed that the 'respect agenda' had improved relationships and the effectiveness of work that teachers and other do with students whose behaviour is sometimes challenging. The growing confidence of the students in the academy that all the adults really care

about their progress has had a noticeable impact on students' approach to learning and to academy life.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The Acting Principal has made a highly significant contribution to the academy since being seconded in January 2013. His professional but approachable personal style has been matched by a very clear vision about good teaching and learning, coupled with resolute determination to ensure the very best for the students of the academy. He has consistently modelled the behaviours that he expects and, through patient and precise coaching, empowered other leaders and teachers to improve their practice. In many cases, the Acting Principal has himself led staff training on improving the quality of teaching. This has inspired colleagues as he quite clearly not only talks about good teaching but also demonstrates that he is an excellent practitioner.

The Acting Principal and the Assistant Principals have formed a very effective team, and have gained the confidence and support of the students, staff and community. Their leadership has enabled middle leaders to improve substantially in confidence and in skill so that they are now much clearer about their accountability and contribution to improvement. Systems to check regularly on students' progress, including all the groups and individuals, are thorough and regular. So too are checks on the quality of teaching and learning, through lesson observations, learning walks and other monitoring such as book scrutiny. The judgements made by leaders about the progress of the academy are, as a result, well informed and accurate.

The governing body continues to develop in preparation for taking on the new, merged academy. The Chair of the Governing Body provides strong leadership to the governors and is a good 'critical friend' to the Acting Principal. Governors receive high quality and evaluative information about all aspects of the academy.

External support

The academy sponsor, the Ormiston Academies Trust, has continued to offer consistent and useful support. They have provided regular visits from their education adviser who, as well as giving the leadership team opportunities for constructive dialogue, writes concise and evaluative reports that enable the governing body and progress board to gain important insights. The progress board, made up of governors, advisers and representatives of the sponsor, meets regularly and scrutinises the progress that the academy is making in raising the attainment of students.

The sponsor has also recognised that the coming phase of development, when the academy merges with Ormiston Ilkeston Academy, is one of potential challenge. Significant support is now in place to increase the capacity of leadership through this

period. The Principal of an outstanding academy has been seconded to provide strategic support and a Vice-Principal from another academy has been seconded for three days each week in the coming term. The sponsor is also arranging for a consultant to assist with all aspects relating to the building programme on the Ilkeston site so that the Principal Designate and his team can focus exclusively on raising achievement.