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Elizabeth Redpath  
Principal  
East Point Academy  
Kirkley Run  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR33 0UQ

Dear Mrs Redpath

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of East Point Academy**

Following my visit with Edwin Powell and Helen Booth, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 9 October 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 which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement 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.

Because of the number of recently appointed new staff, 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 Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely  
Ian Seath

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2013**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and most is good by:
  - extending recently introduced procedures to train teachers and develop good practice across all departments
  - monitoring how well all teachers plan different tasks matched to students' needs and abilities, and measuring the impact this has on students' learning and progress
  - showing teachers how to use the 100 minutes of time available in each lesson to maintain students' interest and engagement, and accelerate their progress
  - checking that all teachers set students targets for improvement and regularly mark students' books to see if they are meeting their targets and know what to do to improve further.
  
- Raise the achievement of all students in all subjects, including those taught off-site, by:
  - embedding the recently introduced procedures to systematically monitor students' progress so that staff have a clear, up-to-date view of each student's performance, especially those eligible for support through the pupil premium, those who are disabled or have special educational needs and students that are taught off-site
  - broadening the curriculum to improve students' learning and progress in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 3, and providing older students with a wider choice of qualifications and awards suited to their abilities and interests improving the quality of provision and monitoring of students' progress in science.
  
- Improve students' behaviour and attendance by:
  - gaining greater consistency in how all teachers manage students' behaviour in lessons
  - strengthening procedures to monitor the attendance and welfare of students taught off-site
  - enhancing the rewards given to students for good behaviour and regular attendance ensuring that all students are confident that staff will resolve the concerns they raise about bullying.
  
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers, and build further capacity to improve by:
  - reorganising the roles of senior leaders so that all of them have clear responsibilities for raising achievement

- strengthening subject leadership, especially in science and in those subjects where students' attainment and progress are not high enough
  - adding interim, measurable targets at key points to the improvement plan to accurately gauge the impact the academy is having on preparing all students for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
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- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
  
  - Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

## **Special measures: monitoring of East Point Academy**

### **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9 October 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, reviewed documents and met with the principal and other leaders, teachers, students, and representatives of the academy sponsor. A total of 32 lessons were visited and 28 teachers observed. This included two observations carried out jointly with managers. Inspectors paid particular attention to students' learning and the accuracy of the academy's assessment of their progress. Improvement plans and documents were examined in detail. Inspectors noted that although plans are in hand to change the curriculum, they have not yet been fully implemented. The changes will be evaluated at the next monitoring visit.

#### **Context**

The staffing of the academy has changed considerably since the last monitoring visit. A significant restructure and simplification of managers and their responsibilities is now largely complete. The executive principal, present at the last monitoring visit, has left. The Chair of the Governing Body has been replaced. The academy sponsors have brought in a significantly wider range of support and expertise to help the academy to recover. Around one third of the teaching staff are new to the academy. The number of senior managers has reduced by half, and new leaders have been and are being appointed. The academy has moved to a simpler departmental structure for subject areas. The academy no longer has off-site provision.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

Many students enter the academy with low levels of attainment. This is especially true in writing, and students who do not improve their writing skills enough do not progress as quickly as they should in other subjects. The academy's assessment of students' progress is broadly accurate. Together with classroom observations and the work in students' books, this shows clearly that in Key Stage 3 most students now progress at a rate that is at least in line with national expectations. Gaps between the progress made by boys and girls are minimal, as are gaps between the progress made by those supported by the pupil premium and their classmates. In Year 9, progress accelerated in 2013, especially for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This is because their needs are now diagnosed early and support is provided promptly. Despite these improvements in progress, however, overall standards remain below national averages in this key stage.

Since the last inspection the provisional GCSE results for 2013 have become available. These show that overall performance remained very similar to 2012, and

below government floor targets. These results were close to those predicted by the academy, indicating a degree of accuracy in assessment. The provisional data indicate that a significant gap exists between the attainment of those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not. However, the gap between the attainment of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and others has narrowed since 2012, as has the gap between boys and girls. Boys outperformed girls in mathematics. The variations in success between individual subjects are too large. The academy recognises that weaknesses in literacy have prevented many students from achieving their full potential, especially in subjects where extensive writing is required in examinations.

In class, some students quickly develop skills of independent learning. This was seen where teachers allowed students to work on their own. In these classes teachers challenged them with work that required them to figure out new problems or develop different viewpoints and opinions. However, such skills are slow to develop when teachers do not do this.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching is improving, and quickly in some parts of the academy. Many teachers are new. An extensive and detailed teaching improvement programme has been introduced. Its aim is to improve the teaching skills of all teachers, including those that are already good. The impact has been most pronounced in Key Stage 4, where inspectors noted a significant amount of good practice and a small amount that was outstanding. There are some good examples where teachers' practice has been improved by the actions taken. Some were observed by inspectors together with academy leaders, in order to verify these improvements.

In Key Stage 3, some strong practice was seen in Year 7. However, teachers are often reluctant to allow students to work problems out for themselves. Typically these lessons contain too many activities that do not challenge students sufficiently. Where the level of the lesson content is too low, or the work has already been covered, students become bored and restless and learning suffers. Inspectors observed a few teachers sticking too rigidly to tight lesson plans, not allowing flexibility to respond to the students' enquiring and sensible questions. In the best examples teachers effortlessly challenged students to think and question, with some excellent learning resulting. In these lessons the teachers showed that they had high expectations for what students could achieve.

Assessment has improved. Teachers now evaluate attainment accurately, and have reliable data to show how students are progressing. In the best examples this information is used to pitch lessons at a level that challenges all, but in others it is not used well enough. There are inconsistencies between teachers and in different subjects. However, the more accurate information gives managers a much improved picture of how well individuals and groups are making progress.

The marking of written work has improved because the academy has introduced a new marking policy. This is not yet being applied consistently by teachers, but some very good examples were seen where targets and necessary improvements were clear and students were given time in class to correct their own work. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics is developing, but not quickly enough. Often, teachers ask students to spell new words and correct grammar and punctuation in their written work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students' attendance is improving because of consistent, rigorous monitoring procedures and prompt action when a problem occurs. It is now above the national average. Teachers are implementing a new behaviour policy. However, students report that while behaviour has improved, some teachers do not apply this policy effectively. The number of days for which students have been excluded is decreasing. Inspectors observed occasional incidents of boisterous behaviour around the academy, but for the most part students moved around calmly. They were generally inquisitive and polite. Those with whom inspectors talked were a credit to their academy.

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

The leadership and management of the academy are improving. The number of senior management posts has been reduced markedly. A new structure is almost complete. Responsibilities have been clearly defined, and the extent to which all staff are held accountable for performance in their areas is improving. The academy sponsor is now playing a much greater role in the provision of support. Good links have been established with outstanding academies within the chain, and with other schools. Good practice is now increasingly being shared between institutions.

The development of teaching and learning has been given priority, and is beginning to have a positive effect. The programmes for improvement are extensive and appropriate. The lesson observations carried out by managers come to accurate conclusions and place a good emphasis on the monitoring of learning. Managers are now beginning to spot and rectify instances where lessons are taught at too low a level or do not challenge all those present. Although the sharing of good practice has started between institutions, it has not yet been sufficiently well developed within the academy and between subjects. Much external support has been provided for heads of subjects to improve teaching and learning within their departments.

The academy's self-assessment is clear and accurate. Managers have a good understanding of the academy's weaknesses. Progress towards improvement targets is monitored closely at senior leader level. However, these targets and associated actions are not implemented or monitored sufficiently well by subject leaders.

Some departmental self-assessments are useful and accurate tools for improvement, but not all. For example, subject leaders do not consistently set targets for progress in Key Stage 3, so teachers cannot be held accountable if this is weak. Subject leadership has been rearranged into discrete subject areas, and some posts are in the process of being filled, for example in science. The very new head of mathematics has already accurately appraised the issues facing his subject.

The academy sponsor has undertaken the external review of governance recommended at the last inspection. This confirmed the issues identified by the inspection. Because of this, a new management board was formed. This group has retained some of the original local governors but has a new Chair with considerable experience of academy improvement and local knowledge. The documents examined by inspectors showed a good degree of challenge by governors, but often not documented well enough to ensure that resulting actions could be monitored effectively. Similarly, issues identified at governor or strategic level rarely find their way into action or improvement plans at subject level, and so cannot be monitored.

### **External support**

Since the last visit the academy sponsor has provided the academy with extensive support. In addition to senior staff to support managers, external consultants have been used extensively to drive up standards in specific subject areas and for particular projects. The breadth of this support has improved markedly since the last monitoring visit. In addition, the principal has established beneficial links with other local schools.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Tackle students' low literacy skills on entry with determination and rigour.
- Ensure that teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations of students, and give them opportunities to develop independent learning skills with confidence.
- Introduce performance targets for all teachers and managers that include attainment and progress at Key Stage 3 so students are better prepared for GCSE work.