

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

7 November 2013

Miss A-M Latham
Principal
The Academy, Selsey
Academy Lane
Chichester
PO20 9EH

Dear Miss A-M Latham

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of The Academy, Selsey

Following my visit to your academy on 7 November 2013 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in January 2013. 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 the serious weakness designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Headon
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4, especially in science, mathematics and English, through teaching that is consistently good or outstanding, by:
 - expecting more of students and offering them more challenge in their class work and homework, while maintaining high levels of support
 - improving students' presentation and organisation of their written work
 - helping students to write more confidently, and in appropriate styles, in all subjects
 - using a variety of ways, including close and pacy questioning, to obtain a good understanding of how well students grasp the main ideas at key points in a lesson, and using this information to make sure they are learning quickly and securely
 - adapting work to the needs of groups of students in every lesson so that everyone can make good progress
 - making sure leaders and managers at all levels use current systems to improve teaching, and monitor the impact, but over much shorter timescales
 - eliminating disruption to lessons.

- Drive up students' hopes and ambitions for their futures, by:
 - maintaining strong links with local colleges of further education and universities
 - identifying and making use of local and national role models, including past students
 - offering them regular chances to experience life beyond the local area
 - raising students' self-esteem.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 7 November 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, a group of pupils and a representative of the sponsor. Documents summarising actions taken by the academy to promote improvement since the first monitoring visit were scrutinised and discussed, including information on attendance and progress. The inspector observed lessons in English, mathematics and science accompanied by senior members of staff.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit there have been a number of significant changes in staffing. An associate headteacher took up her post at the end of September 2013. Since then the roles of the senior leadership team have been refocused to place a greater emphasis upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. One member of the senior leadership team is leaving at Christmas and interviews are shortly to be held to fill this role. A new head of science and a new second in the English department took up their roles in September and a teacher in the mathematics department increased his role from part time to full time in September. One governor has resigned.

The quality of leadership and management at the academy

The new headteacher has quickly and accurately ascertained the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and is strongly focused on improving the quality of teaching. She has evaluated the impact which the academy's action plan has had so far and has made some adjustments in order to accelerate the pace of change.

The senior leadership team has an accurate understanding of the progress which the academy has made to date together with a clear vision of what is needed to ensure further improvements. Data systems are robust and the academy is tracking the progress of students rigorously. Results in the summer 2013 GCSE examinations rose significantly by nine percentage points for those students who gained five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. The percentage of students making expected progress in English was above the national average as was the percentage of students making more than expected progress in this subject. Although the percentage of students making expected progress in mathematics was still below the national, it increased dramatically from 2012. Aspirational targets have been set for the results in 2014 and the progress of students against these targets is being monitored closely.

The senior leadership team is carefully checking the quality of teaching and learning. Joint lesson observations conducted during the monitoring visit indicate that the judgements which they are making on the quality of teaching and learning are

entirely accurate and are giving detailed and helpful feedback to staff on how to improve.

The role of middle managers is developing and they are being held to account more tightly than previously, for the work of their departments. They are meeting regularly with senior leaders to review students' progress and to look at their work. However, there is a need for them to undertake detailed lesson observations and to assume a more proactive leadership role.

Governors regularly check the progress the academy is making against its improvement plan. They have a good understanding of the current position of the academy and the areas which need further development. Each senior member of staff is now linked to a governor. The Chair of the Governing Body meets weekly with the headteacher to review developments and the Chair and vice chair have spent time in the academy accompanying staff on lesson observations to familiarise themselves with the quality of teaching. Governors have undertaken a skills audit and are planning on how they will fill the vacancies caused by parent governors leaving the governing body when their term of office expires and how they will utilise the skills which the retiring parent governors offer. Members of the governing body are beginning to gain support from a local group of governors from other academies which also belong to the Kennal Academies Trust.

Strengths in the academy's approaches to securing improvement:

- As a result of the emphasis which has been placed upon the planning of lessons, the quality of teaching has improved overall. This has led to a much more structured approach to teaching. Lessons now have clear objectives. There is a much greater variety in the activities which students are asked to undertake and teachers check more closely that students understand the work set. In a Year 11 English lesson on comparing characters in *Of Mice and Men*, students were very confident in letting the teacher know when they understood the work and when they needed more help. Teachers are becoming more confident in matching work more closely to the abilities of the students. However, this is currently 'work-in-progress' as not all teachers are as adept at doing this as others.
- Training has helped to improve teachers' questioning skills and now most teachers are not content with a simple answer but probe more deeply. In a Year 11 science lesson, following some individual investigations, the teacher challenged students to explain why certain species were becoming extinct and how this could be prevented. The students, having answered a set of questions, were then asked to write a letter to the government setting out their suggestions for maintaining the species. This structured approach supported students but at the same time encouraged them to think for themselves.
- The academy has improved the management of behaviour by reviewing and strengthening the behaviour policy. This has resulted in a decline in fixed-term exclusions and instances of poor behaviour. Students confirm the

positive impact of the new policy on behaviour and they appreciate the emphasis which has been placed upon rewarding good behaviour. In the lessons observed students were on task and engaged and there was no low-level disruption which inhibited learning.

- The increased focus on attendance, with rewards for good attendance not only for students but also for parents and carers is having a positive effect. Attendance has improved by a whole percentage point when compared with the same time last year and is now much nearer the national average. The academy takes any absence very seriously and the headteacher has made students, parents and carers more aware of the significant effect that poor attendance has on progress.
- Students' skills are improving as a result of a focus on literacy across the curriculum. The school has appointed a literacy czar to ensure all teachers across all subjects emphasise its importance. Teachers are reminding students of the importance of using appropriate subject-specific vocabulary, key words are displayed in rooms and referred to in lessons and the school encourages students to read out loud.
- Students are beginning to develop a greater understanding of the world beyond their local area. Work in tutor groups and assemblies has begun to widen their horizons and aspirations. Some students spoke with enthusiasm of having attended university days at Cambridge and of the achievements of some past students. The success of the school in improving its GCSE results has encouraged students to believe that they can succeed and to develop a greater sense of pride in their school and themselves.

Weaknesses in the academy's approaches to securing improvement:

- Although there has been considerable work on stressing the importance of the good presentation of work, some is still not well presented and books appear untidy. Diagrams are sometimes drawn in pen, and work does not always contain headings or full sentences. Handwriting is sometimes poor and can verge on the illegible.
- In some subjects students are not given enough opportunities to write at length and only short written answers to questions are required. These answers do not contain enough information to help students when they use their books for revision nor do they help to develop the skill of extended writing.
- While homework is set and a new system of independent investigative task work has been trialled in science, too often activities such as 'to complete work begun in class' are set. This does not always extend and challenge thinking or encourage students to work on their own.
- At times, teachers are too cautious in challenging students to take on harder work. They understand that students lack confidence and while it is a fine balance between providing sufficient support and challenging students to think for themselves, they are capable of more.
- In the previous academic year the money allocated to support those students in receipt of free school meals or in public care had been used to help to

improve their achievement when compared with that of other students. However, no overall analysis of the effectiveness of the interventions used has been undertaken. Therefore, individual teachers are not aware of the value of these interventions for future use.

External support

The academy sponsor continues to offer effective support. It has continued to monitor the work of the academy and to provide training for staff. Following a restructuring the sponsor now has a regional director in the area who is working with the academy and providing support to the associate headteacher as necessary.