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Peter Holyk
Principal
Nottingham Girls' Academy
Robin's Wood Road
Nottingham
NG8 3LD

Dear Mr Holyk

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Nottingham Girls' Academy

Following my visit with Wayne Norrie, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 13 November 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 Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of leadership and management at the academy. These concerns were raised due to a significant decline in the academy's 2013 GCSE English examination results.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the academy's correspondence with the examination board. They also examined the school's current data on achievement in English and the English subject leader's report to senior leaders, alongside documentation relating to the management of staff performance. Inspectors met with all members of the teaching staff in the English department, the Principal and Executive Principal, a group of Year 12 students, and representatives from the academy sponsor and council, which provides for the governance of the academy.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

- the quality of leadership and management is good.

Context

With 535 students on roll, Nottingham Girls' Academy is smaller-than-average secondary school. The majority of students come from a wide range of minority

ethnic backgrounds. The largest group in the academy are of Pakistani heritage. About one in four students speaks English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of the students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and some others. The proportion of students who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion supported at school action is above average.

The academy is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. A Local Academy Council is appointed by the Trust.

The academy has appealed against the examination board's moderation of its GCSE English results.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders at all levels share an absolute commitment to providing the best possible education for the students at the academy. After receiving the examination results in August, senior leaders conducted a thorough analysis of all aspects of provision and practice in the English department. This included a detailed evaluation of the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree that these investigations have confirmed that the leadership of English is good. Academy data show that students are making good progress, including in English.

Academy leaders have acted swiftly to minimise any future risk to their GCSE English results. They have replaced the former GCSE examination syllabus with one that is taught by other academies within the trust. Subject leaders from these academies are supporting the English department to deliver this new qualification. This has resulted in additional opportunities for professional development as well as increased opportunities to moderate students' work across the trust. Teachers speak very positively about the impact this is having. They feel supported by the academy's leaders and are rapidly regaining their confidence.

Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, academy leaders have rightly ensured that no students will be disadvantaged in the next stage of their education. Those students who have transferred to the academy's sixth form have all been accepted onto their chosen courses and they will have the opportunity to improve their GCSE English grade this year. Leaders have ensured that students who have left to study in other institutions will also have this opportunity. Students speak extremely positively about the quality of the support they have received.

Students receive good advice and guidance. They feel safe in school and appreciate the strong focus that leaders have on the progress they make as individuals. They describe a vision of 'greater care and mutual respect'.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.

External support

The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust is providing additional support to the English department through expert practitioners from two of its other academies. They have confirmed the accuracy of moderation practice in the English department and they are now supporting teachers in the delivery of the new syllabus. The Foundation Trust also provides effective challenge to the academy through the Executive Principal. He works with the Principal to monitor closely the progress students are making across all subject areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector