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13 December 2013

Will Scott
Headteacher
Sir John Gleed School
Neville Avenue
Spalding
PE11 2EJ

Dear Mr Scott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sir John Gleed School

Following my visit with Sally Lane and Margaret Eldridge-Mrotzek, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 11–12 December 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school 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 not making enough 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, the DfE Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what their students can achieve in lessons
 - track the progress of different groups of students in comparison to the progress of all students and take effective action to narrow any gaps this identifies
 - make effective use of information about what students know and can do when planning lessons and ensure these are appropriate for the needs of all students in the class
 - consistently provide work which is accessible to students of different abilities and particularly for those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language
 - plan lessons that capture students' interest and engage them in their learning
 - regularly set and assess homework
 - mark students' work frequently and provide them with regular and specific feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Take immediate action to improve students' behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring safeguarding procedures meet requirements as a matter of urgency
 - ensuring bullying and homophobic behaviour are quickly eliminated
 - establishing an agreed view of what constitutes good behaviour and how it will be managed in and out of lessons, and ensuring this is shared and supported by all staff and students
 - ensuring all staff contribute to managing students' behaviour so that it that the school is a calm, purposeful place in which students feel safe in and out of lessons
 - improving students' attendance and reducing persistent absence by working closely with parents, and also with the CfBT Schools Trust to identify techniques used successfully in other schools.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body must gain the trust and confidence of the staff and the community by:
 - establishing monitoring procedures which accurately evaluate the quality of the school's work
 - ensuring the outcomes of these checks are used to plan effective actions which quickly secure improvements in behaviour, teaching and achievement
 - improving the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of all students
 - strengthening the leadership and management of provision for students with special educational needs by providing these staff with more training and resources
 - ensuring the governing body is better informed about parents' concerns, how well students behave, the quality of teaching and how the school is

performing, so that it can hold the school properly to account and play a full part in driving its improvement.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, and scrutinised documents and incident logs. They met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, representatives of the governing body, and a representative from the sponsor: the CfBT Schools Trust (CST). Meetings were held with three groups of students and one group of parents. Inspectors also spoke to teachers individually, and to individual students. They observed 33 lessons. Around one-third of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior team or heads of department.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, an executive headteacher and a permanent headteacher have been appointed. Two temporary deputy headteachers have also been appointed, as well as a director of finance, a coordinator of special educational needs, a head of science and a full-time attendance officer. The senior leadership team has been restructured. The academy is not fully staffed. The head of English left at the end of the summer term and has not yet been replaced. The academy employs seven supply teachers to cover long-term staffing vacancies, including three in the English department.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The 2013 GCSE results indicate why the academy was placed in special measures. The percentage of students who gained five or more good grades at GCSE remained static at 41%, which is well below the national average. The academy's targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 were missed in all measures. Progress measures in all subjects also remained well below average. The academy only just met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Overall achievement remains inadequate because there was not enough time to bring about the necessary improvements between April and the time students sat their final GCSE examinations in May and June.

Students in the current Year 11 are expected to achieve similar results, or only slightly better, in 2014. The rate of improvement is not fast enough to bring attainment up to national levels. Rates of progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 remain too low in most subjects, including English and science. In mathematics, there has been some recent improvement in the progress being made by students in their final year. This is confirmed by the school's own data and inspectors' observations. In lessons, students' attainment and progress vary considerably. In some lessons, students make good progress. In others, students' progress is slow and not sufficient to raise standards to the levels expected for their age. In a few lessons, progress is inadequate. Gaps remain between the attainment of students on free school meals

and the national average for this group, with a similar pattern for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.

At A level, results in 2013 showed that Year 13 students made good or better progress in work-related subjects. The few students who enrolled for academic courses made expected progress. This healthy trend is expected to continue in 2014.

The academy has set up new systems to track students' progress, identify those who are falling behind their targets, and measure the effect of the additional support they are given. However, the use of this new data by teachers is inconsistent across the academy, so the full impact on driving up rates of progress in all classes in all subjects is not yet evident.

The academy has recently commenced a whole-school literacy programme. Accelerated reading programmes have been introduced in Years 7 and 8, and regular reading sessions are planned. Students who speak English as an additional language receive focused support, and 'buddy readers' are on hand to help. Reading tests have been introduced to measure students' progress and reading ages are tracked. It is too early to measure the success of this initiative.

The quality of teaching

Around half of the lessons seen during the visit were good or better and some inadequate teaching remains. This is a similar picture to that seen during the inspection in April. Steps taken by the school to improve teaching and learning have yet to have a consistent impact on the experience of students in the classroom, as many initiatives are not part of everyday practice. A growing percentage of teachers follow agreed guidelines, although inconsistency remains.

Further improvements to teaching and learning are being held back by basic weaknesses in planning for good progress in lessons. This was the case at the previous monitoring visit in July and remains a major barrier to progress. Not all teachers subscribe to the strong focus on improving teaching that is required. Some teachers are unclear about what is expected of them. Many do not make full use of the new achievement data they have to plan activities and resources to meet students' needs and to provide challenge. Marking is too variable, often not indicating how students might improve further.

More staff are beginning to devise engaging activities for students, but their impact is variable. This is because challenging lesson objectives are not always planned, or shared with the students, or reviewed during the lesson. Work is not always tailored sufficiently to meet the need of students who have special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language. In a few instances, lessons were not planned at all and were taught 'off the cuff'. These lessons fail to provide the interest and challenge required to elicit good learning outcomes for all students in the class.

The setting of homework is variable. The students and parents spoken to during our visit said that insufficient homework is set and it is too often too easy. Inspectors agree and find that homework does not always provide an appropriate extension to the learning in lessons.

In the best lessons seen during the inspection, thoughtful planning took account of the needs of students. Activities were designed to build the confidence of all students, regardless of their abilities, and they readily rose to the challenges presented. High expectations, good relationships, interesting tasks and careful questioning all contributed to students' positive attitudes to their learning and success in their lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Effective action has been taken to improve this aspect of the academy's work. Students report that they feel safe in the academy and appreciate the calmer atmosphere. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Inspectors observed good behaviour around the academy and good attitudes to learning in most lessons. Despite the variability in the quality of teaching, students follow instructions and complete tasks even when tasks are not stimulating and challenging.

Students report that when bullying occurs it is mainly name-calling, cyber or occasionally physical bullying, and that most is dealt with quickly and effectively. Bullying and complaints logs are carefully maintained by the academy. These confirm that the number of such incidents is falling. Systems for excluding secondary students are robust and recently rates of exclusions have increased due to the 'zero tolerance' approach now taken by academy staff on behaviour issues. Students recognise the changes and understand the new behaviour management systems. Most teachers and support staff use these systems very effectively and manage behaviour well. Safeguarding procedures meet the current national requirements.

Recording and tracking of attendance are thorough; attendance is checked and recorded in every lesson and all absences are accounted for. The number of students who are persistently absent has decreased sharply, but overall attendance rates remain below average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders have readily accepted the findings of the last inspection and are determined to move the academy forward. The new headteacher is the driving force and is well supported by other leaders in the restructured senior leadership team. A culture of openness within this team has helped senior leaders to identify how to set about securing the improvements needed. This improvement drive is not reflected at subject leader level to the same extent, because some staff do not have all the skills they need for this role. Leaders of subjects and those responsible for students who

have special educational needs do not have a thorough understanding of how they can use performance data and quality assurance systems to raise achievement. The lack of a permanent head of English makes it difficult to bring about sustained improvements in this area.

Senior leaders have quickly established monitoring procedures that enable them to accurately evaluate the quality of the academy's work. The outcomes of these checks are then used to plan appropriate actions. These have secured improvements in behaviour and attendance, but improvements in teaching and achievement have been harder to accomplish.

External training courses such as the 'Improving Teacher Programme' and the 'Outstanding Teacher Programme' have been successful in establishing more good and outstanding teaching across the academy. Staff whose practice requires further improvement are offered one-to-one coaching or invited to attend clinics. However, these important training opportunities are voluntary and there is no requirement for staff to take them up. Consequently, some teachers who need help to improve are not taking up the help offered. Teaching has not improved enough to have the impact on achievement that is needed. High levels of staff absence and high numbers of cover staff further hamper the establishment of good teaching as the norm.

A number of lessons during this monitoring inspection were observed jointly with a member of the senior management team to confirm their judgements and gauge their accuracy in making judgements, which are now reliable. The academy rightly recognises that there is more to accomplish, and that the inadequate teaching has yet to be eradicated.

The academy acknowledges that the curriculum was previously not fit for purpose, and significant revisions have been made. The early start to Key Stage 4 in Year 9 has been removed, and the academy has moved away from accelerated examination courses. Neither of these approaches met the needs of the students. The science curriculum has been overhauled, and the courses planned now better meet the needs of students of all abilities.

The governing body has secured the leadership of the academy through the recent appointments of an executive headteacher and headteacher. The governing body has refined its action plan. Review dates are set at regular intervals, and evidence used to check the impact of actions is clearly recorded. The governing body works in close partnership with school leaders and the sponsors to check that the actions taken are making a difference. Regular checks are made on the views of parents, and feedback through the newly formed parent and teacher group is proving useful. Governors have done a lot to support the academy but acknowledge that there is still more work to be done to ensure that improvements to teaching and learning can be made. The review of governance recommended at the last inspection has been delayed due to an unavoidable cancellation, and is now due to take place in February 2014.

External support

The CST has drawn upon its extensive network of support, and this has been highly successful in stabilising and providing strategic direction for the academy.

Increased staffing capacity is being provided through an associate headteacher and an experienced part-time head of English. Training has been provided in leadership at senior and subject levels. Training in classroom observation techniques has been particularly successful. Teachers have been supported in their lessons by consultants working alongside them. This support is very well received by staff.

Reviews have taken place of special educational needs, safeguarding, behaviour and finance. Review dates are set at regular intervals and evidence of progress is clearly recorded. The CST recognises the need for the academy to become self-sufficient and is working steadily to that end. It also recognises the need to evaluate the effectiveness of this support and to adjust it accordingly.