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Mr David Smith  
Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy  
King George Avenue  
Ilkeston  
DE7 5HS

Dear Mr Smith

### **No formal designation, monitoring inspection of Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy**

Following my visit with Julia Wright (Her Majesty's Inspector), Roisin Chambers, Robin Fugill and Sue Hall (additional inspectors) to your academy on 11 and 12 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm my findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the 'no formal designation' procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because both of the academy's predecessor schools were judged to be causing concern.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed or visited 55 lessons on both sites in a wide range of subjects and met with leaders and managers at all levels. Meetings were held with several groups of students and the academy's records of the progress that students have made since September were carefully examined. Representatives of the governing body and the academy sponsor, The Ormiston Academies Trust, also spoke with inspectors.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time, the academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

### **Context**

The Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy was formed in September 2013 from the merger of the Ormiston Enterprise Academy (now the North Campus) and the Ormiston Ilkeston Academy (now the South Campus). Both of these academies were in special measures following inspections in November 2012 and January 2013. From

September 2013, Ofsted has regarded the merged academy as a new school and therefore it has not been in a category of concern.

The academy is currently operating with about 150 students in Years 8, 9 and 11 on the North Campus, and about 800 students in Years 7 to 11 on the South Campus. The academy sponsor has provided substantial additional support to help leaders raise standards and to enable the complex process of merger and new building to take place. Plans are now well advanced for a major building programme on the South Campus, to replace some dilapidated existing accommodation and to provide enough space for all the students. Although the new building will not be complete until 2015, all students will move onto the South Campus site in September 2014.

Two acting principals led the predecessor academies, and the acting principal at the South site was appointed to the permanent principal's role during the summer term of 2013. Two new assistant principals will join the academy in January 2014. The academy has experienced some difficulty in recruiting suitable subject specialist teachers in some subject areas and, because of this, a number of temporary and supply teachers are covering gaps in the timetable. A total of around 40 staff accepted voluntary redundancy packages as part of the reorganisation associated with the merger and because of a decline in student numbers. The Chair of the Governing Body sadly passed away this term. A new chair has been appointed.

The academy is now an average-sized secondary school. There are a high proportion of girls compared to most schools and a higher than average proportion of students eligible for additional government funding because they are entitled to free school meals, are looked after or for other reasons. Very few students are from minority ethnic heritage or do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs who are supported at school action level is the same as in most schools, but a higher proportion than average are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational need.

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

Because the new, merged academy does not yet have any examination results, inspectors examined the academy's records of the progress that students have made from starting points at the end of last year. They also judged the level of attainment of the students in the lessons observed.

There is some strong evidence that the rates of progress, although still requiring improvement, are better than in the predecessor academies. Many students join the academy with big gaps in their basic skills of numeracy or literacy, and many of the senior students have a legacy of underachievement from their previous schooling. The academy is confident that the present Year 11 will achieve rates of progress that are close to the national average. Academy leaders have established rigorous checks on progress, using carefully moderated assessments including external

marking. They are working hard to ensure that all staff, students and parents understand what good learning and progress should look like. Most of the students spoken with recognised that, since September, their targets for achievement had become more ambitious. Although there are still some inconsistencies in the way that targets are being set, particularly for Key Stage 4 students, there is now a very clear system to check that students are making good progress. This will enable teachers and leaders to take action if any students fall behind. It is particularly encouraging to note that in some subjects, disadvantaged students (who nationally often do less well) are making better progress than others. Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are also making progress that is broadly in line with expectations at this stage.

In just over half of the lessons observed, inspectors judged that students are making good or outstanding progress. It is, however, very variable, depending largely on the quality of the teaching or the appropriateness of the curriculum. In a proportion of lessons, achievement is inadequate. In some cases, these lessons are where the academy has had difficulty recruiting suitable teachers. There is evidence that actions to improve literacy and numeracy are having some impact, and teachers are learning more techniques to promote these skills. In a Year 11 construction lesson, for example, the teacher worked with persistence and patience to ensure that students could explain clearly, in the correct vocabulary, what they were doing. Inspectors judged that, in general, students are keen to learn and do well. When exposed to good and outstanding teaching, they respond with enthusiasm and energy and take care to produce good work. Where expectations are too low, however, or where the teaching is uninteresting, students quickly switch off.

There is some evidence that students of middle ability are achieving less well. The academy recognises this, and is working on plans to address the issue. Achievement in the sixth form is the strongest in the academy. Students have positive attitudes to their learning, are given good guidance about suitable courses and generally make at least expected progress.

### **The quality of teaching**

The acting principals of the predecessor academies implemented a rigorous approach to checking the quality of teaching. Linked to this, leaders have put in place a number of approaches to improving the skills and techniques of teachers. Leaders have tackled inadequate teaching and support programmes have been devised for teachers whose teaching requires improvement. Although some teachers have been reluctant to cooperate fully with an open approach to checking and improving teaching, there is strong evidence that the teachers who have been willing to seek advice and support have made significant improvements.

Good and outstanding teaching was observed that enabled students to make rapid progress and learn with enjoyment. These are well-planned lessons that closely match the needs of the students. Expectations are high so that students do not lose focus. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to choose stimulating

resources and set appropriate tasks. Some marking of students' work is very good, clearly showing the next steps that students need to take. In many cases, students then actively respond to the marking by making corrections or adding extra details. Students reported that they were regularly involved in checking their own work and that of others. Teaching in the sixth form is particularly strong with the great majority being good or outstanding.

In contrast, just under half of teaching observed during the inspection required improvement or was inadequate. In these lessons, not enough allowance is made for the different abilities and needs of the students. Teachers often ask questions that require only simple answers that do not force students to think sufficiently and do not provide an effective way to check understanding. In too many classes teachers do not expect enough of the students, consequently, they do not take enough care to produce good work. In some of the lessons visited, inspectors observed either very little marking or it was of poor quality.

There is still a long way to go before the overall quality of teaching becomes good, but inspectors judged that the balance of good and outstanding teaching (just over half), means that the academy's teaching is not inadequate, but requires improvement. In the sixth form, the majority of teaching observed was good or better.

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

All the students spoken with were clear that behaviour in the academy is continuing to improve. The systems of rewards and sanctions are clear and most teachers, including temporary teachers, use them consistently. Leaders have dealt firmly with poor behaviour and despite this, the number of fixed term exclusions is lower than for the predecessor academies. Attendance has improved and is now about the same as in most secondary schools. Fewer students have persistent low attendance than in most schools. Academy staff are rigorous in getting students to lessons promptly and in checking their attendance. The attendance of students in the sixth form is above average.

The conduct of students around the site is broadly good mannered and considerate. Most students do as they are asked and are positive about their schooling. Behaviour in lessons, however, is directly linked to the quality of teaching. Good study habits are evident when teachers ensure that they happen, but often students are over-dependent on their teachers. Conduct and behaviour for learning in the sixth form are good.

The academy provides appropriate teaching to help students to make informed choices about their own safety and well-being. For example, e-safety is covered extensively in lessons and, during the inspection, workshops run by the charity 'Prison Me No-Way!' were taking place. Sixth-form students are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training and also have a high-quality personal development programme.

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

The academy principal has now fully settled into his role and has been highly effective in building the new senior team and in gaining the confidence of students, staff and the wider community. He and other leaders are rarely in their offices and sustain a high-profile around the academy, which is very much appreciated by staff and students.

The academy's processes to check on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough, accurate and robust. Not only do leaders and the governing body have a clear idea about where teaching is good and where it requires improvement, nearly all of the teachers observed by inspectors were able to make an accurate evaluation of their own teaching. Although it is too early to be able to judge the impact of the performance management of staff, leaders are gathering useful information and providing good, targeted professional development to help staff improve. Work undertaken by the principal, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Ormiston Academies Trust has begun to break down the barriers of distrust between teachers' professional associations and leadership. This was preventing effective work to improve teaching and learning. Although much remains to be done, many more teachers than previously are now prepared to engage positively with their own improvement and evaluation.

Although some changes to the qualifications and subjects have been made to match better the needs of the students, notably in the sixth form, the curriculum still requires further improvement. Some of the courses offered at Key Stage 4 do not provide enough challenge or suitable qualification routes for middle and higher ability students. In some cases, the newly formed, merged departments have not yet had time to evaluate the effectiveness of courses being taught at Key Stage 3. The academy leadership is aware of the current shortcomings and is currently working on new programmes to begin from September 2014.

The leadership of the sixth form is good. Students are well guided to suitable programmes, and their progress and attendance are closely checked. The new requirement for a full study programme for students in Year 12 has been effectively implemented and students who have not gained Level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics are continuing to study these subjects. There is an effective programme to promote study skills and habits in preparation for the next stage in students' education.

The improvements made since the predecessor schools were judged to require special measures in November and January last year is impressive. Leaders now have both the skills and techniques to be good, and have demonstrated a good capacity for further improvement. The appointment of two further assistant principals from January is expected to strengthen the academy's leadership further.

The governing body has been reformed over the last year and is now much more focused on the achievement of students and the quality of teaching and learning. Well-supported by the previous and current Chairs of the Governing Body, governors are building their skills and expertise in holding the academy effectively to account. A Standards and Curriculum committee meets regularly and has now merged with the Progress Board to undertake the monthly monitoring of the academy.

### **External support**

The academy sponsor, the Ormiston Academies Trust, has provided exemplary support since the full difficulties in the two predecessor academies became clear. Key strategic decisions were made promptly and astute, effective action was taken at all levels. The sponsor appointed a new Chair of the Governing Body with a role to re-focus governors on the key task of raising achievement. All aspects relating to the merger of the two academies were managed separately so that governors and the senior teams could concentrate on teaching and learning without being distracted by buildings and other issues. High-quality human resources support was supplied to assist with the staff re-structuring.

The sponsor has also taken care to find suitable, experienced individuals to support the academy leadership team:

- an experienced principal from another of the sponsor's academies has provided mentoring and advice to the senior team and assisted with the development of effective management structures and activities
- a local consultant, a former headteacher with substantial experience in schools causing concern, was employed. Initially this was part-time, but his contribution was valued sufficiently for the sponsors to agree to a full time role as associate principal on a temporary basis
- the sponsors have also seconded a vice-principal from Ormiston Sandwell Academy to help develop the academy's systems for checking on students' progress.

This additional, closely targeted support has allowed the able but relatively inexperienced senior leadership team to grow quickly in confidence and stature. The sponsor has also contracted with an education adviser to make regular checks on the progress that the academy is making and report these to the monthly progress board meetings and the governing body. Her reports provide timely and accurate evaluation, which has helped the sponsor to tailor the leadership support more precisely. She has also been able to start work to improve the skills and practices of middle leaders.

To support the process of the merger, the sponsors also agreed to fund the cost of new uniform and physical education clothing for all students. This has had a powerful impact in helping students from both of the former academies to feel part of one new academy. Indeed, some of the students spoken with expressed some anger that teachers had made comparisons between classes on the two sites and said; 'We don't want to compete with each other, we want to be treated as one.'



The Ormiston Academy Trust has committed to sustaining a high level of support for the academy until the new building programme is complete and all students are on the single site.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the overall quality of teaching by:
  - promoting greater consistency through collaboration, sharing good practice and frequent, honest appraisal of performance
  - developing specific, bespoke professional development programmes and coaching for all teachers so that they are absolutely clear about which skills need to improve and how they can do this
  - ensuring that performance management is used effectively to reward and challenge teachers in relation to the quality of their teaching.
- Raise standards of achievement by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan lessons to match the prior attainment of students, so that they are able to make good progress
  - helping teachers, students and parents to a better understanding of what good progress is like so that there is constructive dialogue about it and quicker recognition of when it is not good
  - ensuring that the progress of students from all levels of prior attainment is checked and regularly compared to national benchmarks.
- Rectify gaps in the basic numeracy and literacy skills of students after they join the academy, so that they are better prepared to take full advantage of their secondary education.

I am copying this letter and the attached report to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. I will also publish it on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**