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9 January 2014

Mrs Jane Willis  
Principal  
Nightingale Academy  
34 Turin Road  
London  
N9 8DQ

Dear Mrs Willis

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Nightingale Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 8 January 2014 with Peter Limm, Additional Inspector, 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 Enfield, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Headon  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better by ensuring that teachers:
  - take account of students' literacy and language skills so that work is set at the right level
  - check students' understanding during lessons, adapting teaching to allow everyone to learn
  - provide opportunities for students to practise and develop their reading, writing and speaking skills in every subject
  - mark work regularly to tell students how to improve, provide time for students to respond to comments, and follow this up with meaningful homework.
- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by:
  - making sure that all staff share responsibility for checking attendance
  - providing consistently high-quality teaching that interests and engages students.
- Improve the leadership and management of the sixth form and raise students' achievement by:
  - placing students on courses that are matched to their level of ability making sure that all students have good skills in literacy, English and mathematics before starting higher-level courses
  - improving the range of subjects and qualifications that are studied at Key Stage 4, particularly for the more-able students, so that they are well prepared for A-level study.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9 January 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspectors met with the Principal, members of the senior leadership team, a representative of the sponsor and the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector met briefly with another member of the governing body who was visiting the academy. The inspectors observed 15 lessons, 13 of which were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. In lessons, inspectors talked to students and viewed their work. Inspectors scrutinised documentation to show evidence of the work taken to improve standards. These included attendance figures and information about the progress students are making. The single central record, which confirms that safeguarding checks have been made on staff, was examined.

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring inspection in June 2013, there have been significant changes to staffing. New heads of faculty have taken up posts in English, science and creative and digital arts. A new coordinator to take responsibility for Key Stage 4 science has been appointed and three experienced qualified teachers and two newly qualified teachers have joined the academy. Four trainee teachers have also been employed. The senior leadership team has been restructured and one Vice-Principal has now left, as has the temporary Associate Vice-Principal. Three new teaching assistants have been appointed. A data manager, an examinations officer, a new office manager and a new site assistant have also joined the academy. Three new governors have been appointed. A new, but experienced, Chair of the Governing Body is now in post.

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

The Principal and the senior leadership team have continued to consolidate the initiatives which they had begun to introduce at the time of the previous monitoring visit. Their determination and clear understanding of what they wish to achieve are undiminished and they have sustained the impetus in driving this forward. They remain very clear that the most important issue is to improve the quality of teaching and learning at all key stages.

The Principal has re-structured the senior leadership team, including the leadership of the sixth form, to ensure that further improvements are introduced and sustained. Data tracking is now more rigorous and is used more accurately to assess the abilities of students and to track their progress more tightly so that support can be swiftly given. The range of subjects in the sixth form has been significantly enhanced, with much more emphasis placed upon ensuring that students are now on courses which suit their abilities and needs more closely.

The emphasis upon improving the quality of teaching and learning meant that results in summer 2013 rose by 10 percentage points for those students who gained five good quality GCSEs, including English and mathematics. When students' starting points are considered the proportion of students making reasonable or good progress has increased since the previous year. It is evident therefore that the initiatives introduced have begun to have some impact. However, they are not yet embedded consistently well across the academy to bring about more rapid improvement.

Senior leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching closely. They regularly conduct short visits to lessons, look at agreed themes and have developed a more systemised and rigorous checking of students' work. Heads of departments are involved in this process and they are being held much more accountable for the work in their subjects. The judgements of the senior leadership team on the quality of teaching seen in the lessons observed on the monitoring visit agreed with those of the inspectors.

The governing body has conducted a skills audit and new members have been recruited to broaden its expertise. The Rapid Improvement Group has started to challenge the academy more effectively, but this process does not yet encompass the whole governing body. The Rapid Improvement Group is aware of how the pupil premium (funding allocated to provide extra support for students who are in receipt of free school meals, are in care or come from service families) has been allocated, but it has not yet fully interrogated the academy data from the summer 2013 results.

### **Strengths in the academy's approaches to securing improvement**

- As a result of training which has been provided, teachers' awareness and understanding of what is required to improve students' literacy and language skills have increased. The introduction of a daily morning structured reading programme during tutor time and the additional support programmes for those students who have greatest need are beginning to have an impact upon levels of literacy. More opportunities have been planned for students to practise and develop their reading and speaking skills, although sometimes teachers do not use them as well as they could.
- The restructuring of the academy day has enabled timetabled faculty meetings to take place which have impacted positively upon the quality of teachers' planning. Lessons are now planned better with clear lesson objectives. Many plans take the needs of individual students into account, especially those who are in receipt of the pupil premium or who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Some plans identify clearly how these students will be supported in their learning, but this is not the case in all instances.
- A revision to the academy's marking policy, including the introduction of a booklet for staff on how to make marking more effective and to encourage students to respond positively, is ensuring that students have a better understanding of how

to improve their work. Marking is improving, but this is at an early stage of development and its application and practice are not yet consistent across the academy. Students are not always taking the opportunity to respond to the marking in their books.

- A redesigned approach to homework at Key Stage 3, with extended learning tasks online, is supporting the work which is taking place in class.
- There has been a very strong focus on improving attendance. The appointment of a new attendance officer, who works closely with the local Safer Schools Officer, has had an impact. Figures remain below average but show significant signs of improvement. Any absence is tracked closely, home visits are made and students rewarded for good attendance. Persistent absences, although still high, have also reduced. The academy has adopted a sensible staged approach to this, but follows up all persistent absentees and uses legal sanctions where necessary.
- The review of the sixth form with an external adviser has resulted in a complete reorganisation of the sixth form. Courses for Year 12 students who began in September have been restructured and a system of pathways has been established to suit better the needs of students and to ensure they are on the right courses. Year 12 students, for example, received a comprehensive induction programme. However, some issues relating to timetabling still remain to be resolved. The academy's records of observations of the quality of teaching in the sixth form show an improved picture and this was supported by observations during the monitoring visit.

### **Weaknesses in the academy's approaches to securing improvement**

- There is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning, with not enough teaching that is yet good or outstanding. The pace of some lessons is not correct in that it is either not fast enough for some students, who consequently waste time, or is too fast and does not allow for students to understand fully or complete what they are being asked to do. In some lessons, teachers do not regularly check for understanding and some pupils are left for too long without common misconceptions being corrected.
- Teachers do not always probe students' understanding sufficiently with their questioning. They sometimes accept too readily the answers which are given and do not demand deeper explanations which would extend students' thinking.
- In some lessons the most able students are not challenged sufficiently to think for themselves. Sometimes, teachers give the answers before students have had time to fathom it out for themselves. The most able students are also not always being given work which will extend their understanding, as the work is not set at the right level for them. It is not always sufficiently demanding and they therefore waste time when their learning could be extended.
- The academy has begun to address the issue of punctuality to lessons, but there remains a way to go on this. A minority of students arrive late to lessons during the day and miss important parts of lessons. In some classes the first lesson of

the day did not get off to a sharp beginning as students were slow in arriving from tutor time.

- There is not enough emphasis on ensuring that students present their work neatly. In some books seen the work was not written in full sentences, there were huge gaps where pages had been missed out and handwriting was illegible. Students would find it impossible to revise for examinations from these books.

### **External support**

The sponsor has strengthened its support for the academy and is continuing to monitor its progress tightly. Its representative visits on a weekly basis and, as well as providing curriculum advice, also advises on the management of the academy's finances. The sponsor has also provided the academy with some middle leaders for vacancies that it has found difficult to fill. The academy has made good use of other external providers, brokering support from the London hub of academies where necessary.