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15 January 2014

Ms Rebecca Staples  
Danum Academy  
Armthorpe Road  
Doncaster  
DN2 5QD

Dear Ms Staples

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Danum Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 14 January 2014, 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 recent section 5 inspection. Thank you for allowing my colleague, Chris Smith HMI, to accompany me.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 25 September 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher; the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor; three representatives from the sponsor, CfBT, including the current school advisor; and other members of the senior leadership team. The sponsor's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, two new deputy headteachers have taken up their posts. One started in January 2014, the other in October 2013. A principal attendance officer took up post in January 2014, as did a principal key worker. A 'Commando Joe' has been commissioned to work with the school two a days a week from January 2014

to support raising standards. The data manager will start in February 2014. Three teachers left at the end of December 2013.

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

The headteacher and two deputy headteachers have an extremely well-developed understanding of what is wrong, how it can be fixed and how long it will take to do it. The school's improvement plan clearly reflects the areas for improvement and is detailed enough to ensure people can be held to account for progress against the success criteria. Much training has already happened to improve teaching and to enable staff to share the good practice already in the school. However, senior leaders are fully aware that the overall quality of teaching across the school needs to improve further.

Data management is much improved. Senior leaders now have a clear overview of the progress students are making and well thought through plans are in place to support students to make better progress. There are still some issues with the reliability of the data but there are checks and balances in place to ensure the data is increasingly accurate.

Senior leaders have identified that good attendance is a critical aspect to improving the progress students make. Strategies are in place to improve attendance in Key Stage 4, including links with parents through a parents' information evening for Year 10. A higher proportion of students attend each day than last year and fewer students are persistently absent. However, this work is not complete.

The sponsor, in conjunction with the school, has set up a core improvement group which meets each month to monitor the impact of the actions taken on improving teaching, progress made by students and attendance. This group is attended by the Chair of Governors, other representatives from the sponsor and senior leaders.

The external review of governance has taken place. The report has not been published. The headteacher has made sure governors have much detailed information about the progress being made against the improvement plan. However, not all governors challenge the headteacher and other senior leaders. This means governors are not fully aware of the impact of strategies in place.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint NQTs after consultation with the lead HMI.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**