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Dr Tesca Bennett
Principal
Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy
Launcelot Road
Bromley
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Dear Dr Bennett

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 12 May, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 academy's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the principal, other senior leaders and the Chief Executive Officer of the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation Trust, a group of staff members, the Chair and three members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. Informal conversations were held with primary and secondary pupils during break and lunch times. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. Tours of both primary and secondary sites were conducted with the principal. The academy's record of checks made on new staff and other documents were reviewed.

Context

Since the inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. Eighteen staff have left the academy, including three teachers who held posts of responsibility, seven other teachers and eight support staff. Five new leaders and eight teachers have been appointed to fill the resulting vacancies. A business manager and an

educational welfare officer have taken up their posts. A review of the current pastoral support system has been undertaken. Leadership and management of the services providing support for pupils will be restructured in September. A new behaviour policy has been introduced and changes made to how pupils use the isolation room at the secondary site. The building programme at the primary site is now complete.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since the inspection, the principal and the governing body have started to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the report. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's action plan are detailed and build successfully upon the work already started. Appropriate priorities have been identified. Regular reviews are planned to check if improvements have been successful and completed within the necessary timescale. All the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report have been addressed. However, some actions need more detail. For example, it is not clear how teachers will support the most-able learners to make good progress in lessons.

Leaders are taking appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching and help pupils to make better progress. Leaders know where there are weaknesses in teaching and provide effective support to help teachers improve their practice. They have ensured that all staff and students are aware of the raised expectations concerning teaching and learning. As a result, more pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. The progress of particular groups of pupils, including those eligible for the additional pupil premium funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, is monitored carefully to ensure that gaps between their performance and that of their peers are quickly remedied. Leaders are aware that further improvements in teaching are required. For example, the feedback provided by teachers in pupils' books is of a variable quality and pupils do not always know how to improve their work. Some teaching is not pitched at the correct level so that all pupils, including the most able, are sufficiently challenged.

The academy is taking robust action to improve the behaviour and safety of pupils. The number and frequency of serious behaviour incidents has declined. There are fewer incidents of poor behaviour which result in pupils being sent to the isolation room. Attendance rates are broadly in line with those of other schools and, while there is some variability across different year groups, the trend is an improving one overall. The number of pupils who are persistently late to school is also reducing, although, within the secondary provision, it is still above the national average. The academy has markedly improved how it tracks the behaviour of pupils and uses this information to identify when further interventions are needed. The new behaviour policy has been shared with staff and pupils so that they are aware of the raised expectations. Leaders consider that pupils have better attitudes to their learning and that behaviour is now good in most lessons. However, some pupils still express concerns about bullying and the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils,

particularly during social times and before and after school. Some pupils demonstrate a lack of understanding about how their behaviour impacts on others. A small number are choosing not to engage with the support available to them and the academy's use of exclusions has risen as a result. Many of the recent changes to improve behaviour are at an early stage and it is too early to judge the longer-term impact they will have. For example, new policies and procedures relating to the restructured pastoral system have yet to be shared with staff. Further staff training will be required in September to ensure that the new systems are working and being applied consistently throughout the academy.

The governing body is working closely with the federation trust executive to ensure that the necessary improvements are made. Governors are liaising effectively with parents so that they can play their part in improving behaviour and are aware of the actions the academy has taken. Governors make regular visits to the academy to check that improvements are making a difference. Governors have an accurate understanding about what needs to be done to improve the academy. The Chair and several representatives of the governing body are members of the task group which is leading and monitoring the action plan. This group also includes a representative of the local authority, an independent adviser, the principal and representatives from the wider federation. They are working together effectively to implement the action plan. However, monitoring roles need to be more clearly defined to ensure that leaders are held formally to account.

The Haberdashers' Aske's Federation Trust has provided strong support to the academy. This includes providing training for governors and teachers, offering support to leaders and providing opportunities to observe outstanding practice across the federation. A senior leader has been deployed from another federation school to lead the English department until a permanent appointment is made. The trust has also carried out and commissioned a number of reviews to identify where further improvements can be made.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The academy's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Education Funding Agency, the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body, The Chief Executive Officer of the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation Trust Board and the Director of Children's Services for Lewisham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox

Her Majesty's Inspector