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23 May 2014

Neil Powell  
Principal  
East Point Academy  
Kirkley Run  
Lowestoft  
NR33 0UQ

Dear Mr Powell

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of East Point Academy**

Following my visit with Piers Ranger and Mina Drever, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 21–22 May 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place April 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures. However, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs.

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 Director of Children's Services for Suffolk and the Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that none is inadequate and most is good by:
  - extending recently introduced procedures to train teachers and develop good practice across all departments
  - monitoring how well all teachers plan different tasks matched to students' needs and abilities, and measuring the impact this has on students' learning and progress
  - showing teachers how to use the 100 minutes of time available in each lesson to maintain students' interest and engagement, and accelerate their progress
  - checking that all teachers set students targets for improvement and regularly mark students' books to see if they are meeting their targets and know what to do to improve further.
  
- Raise the achievement of all students in all subjects, including those taught off-site, by:
  - embedding the recently introduced procedures to systematically monitor students' progress so that staff have a clear, up-to-date view of each student's performance, especially those eligible for support through the pupil premium, those who are disabled or have special educational needs and students that are taught off-site
  - broadening the curriculum to improve students' learning and progress in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 3, and providing older students with a wider choice of qualifications and awards suited to their abilities and interests
  - improving the quality of provision and monitoring of students' progress in science.
  
- Improve students' behaviour and attendance by:
  - gaining greater consistency in how all teachers manage students' behaviour in lessons
  - strengthening procedures to monitor the attendance and welfare of students taught off-site
  - enhancing the rewards given to students for good behaviour and regular attendance ensuring that all students are confident that staff will resolve the concerns they raise about bullying.
  
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers, and build further capacity to improve by:
  - reorganising the roles of senior leaders so that all of them have clear responsibilities for raising achievement
  - strengthening subject leadership, especially in science and in those subjects where students' attainment and progress are not high enough adding interim, measurable targets at key points to the improvement plan to accurately

gauge the impact the academy is having on preparing all students for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

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

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 21–22 May 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, a representative from the academy chain sponsors, various leaders including those responsible for key subject areas, and informally with students at breaks and mealtimes. A total of 29 lessons were visited covering both key stages, some as joint observations with a senior member of staff. Inspectors paid particular attention to scrutinising students' work in mathematics, English, science and humanities.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, a number of important changes have been made. These have served to stabilise issues relating to leadership and management. The staff with whom inspectors talked felt reassured that the academy now has strong leadership. A new permanent Principal has been appointed. He is experienced in academy improvement, having previously led a similar academy to 'outstanding'. Reorganisation of the academy's management team is now almost complete. The responsibility for teaching and learning has been moved to a different senior leader who has considerable experience in this crucial area. The academy has opened two new centres to help students with behavioural, literacy or numeracy support needs. Although it is too soon to judge their effect on achievement, improvements in behaviour are clear.

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

The academy has consolidated the improvements seen at the last visit. A steady improvement in both the attainment and progress of students has continued. No new national test or examination data have been produced since the last monitoring visit. Inspectors checked the accuracy of the academy's own assessments carefully. As at previous monitoring visits these assessments were found to be broadly accurate in key subjects, but occasionally overgenerous at higher levels. In some subjects beyond the core of English, mathematics and science, for example within the humanities area, the extent and accuracy of assessment are insufficient to give students good guidance.

The academy's own data show that the decline in GCSE results seen in previous years has stabilised and modest improvements should be seen in 2014., the academy predicts that the proportions of students gaining passes at grades A\* to C in English and mathematics will increase to around the national average. Although the proportion likely to achieve the very highest grades of A\* and A is low, given the

low or very low levels of prior attainment on entry, this represents better-than-expected performance for many students.

The gaps in attainment between different groups are narrowing. For boys and girls the gap is a little larger than the national average but with an improving trend. The gap between the attainment of students for whom the academy receives additional funding through the pupil premium and other groups is smaller than average, having shown a marked improvement over the last two years. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs attain lower standards than their peers, and this gap is wider than the national average, though again an improving trend is apparent.

In Key Stage 3, the academy's data indicate that students generally attain expected standards though relatively few exceed those standards.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching remains close to that seen at the last monitoring visit. This represents an improvement since the inspection that placed the academy in special measures. The academy has too few teachers who model outstanding teaching. Inspectors observed effective teaching which led to good learning in a substantial number of the lessons seen, but learning was weak in a few other lessons. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods. Where learning was most effective, students worked on demanding tasks at a level that stretched them, and used the skills and understanding they had gained to solve new problems. Inspectors observed some students being silly and distracting others in a few lessons in which teachers' expectations were too low. However, the same students were observed later in the day behaving with maturity and learning well in lessons in which the teacher had high expectations.

The new senior manager responsible for teaching and learning has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Systems to identify and improve teaching that needs improvement are now embedded, and the academy can point to examples of teachers whose practice has improved as a result.

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

The academy has a new policy for behaviour which clearly outlines expectations, sanctions and rewards and is posted in every classroom. However, although it is too soon to determine whether this is effective, students say that a few teachers do not apply the policy and its sanctions evenly.

At the last monitoring visit, inspectors noted some examples of weak behaviour around the academy site. In addition to the new behaviour policy the academy has

increased the presence of supervising adults around the academy at break and meal times. As a result, fewer examples of poor behaviour were observed by inspectors.

Data to illustrate changes and trends in attendance and exclusions show that attendance is improving and is now broadly average. Persistent absence is also improving but has not yet reached the national average. The number of permanent exclusions has reduced significantly from last year. This has been helped by the development of behavioural support units. Safeguarding procedures and policies to ensure child protection meet requirements.

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

The new Principal has a clear understanding of the strengths and remaining weaknesses of the academy, and this is now shared with senior leaders. The academy self-assessment is realistic, though at the time of writing is out-of-date and being reviewed. Accountability is well established – staff are held responsible for the performance of their students.

The middle and subject leaders inspectors met demonstrated an awareness of the issues facing the academy and were able to talk at length about how they were making contributions to whole-academy and individual subject improvement. In mathematics, English, physical education, art, business, information and communication technology and media, systems for monitoring and improvement are developing well. For example, the checking of marking to ensure that it is helpful to students is carried out competently. The accuracy of assessment is monitored, and lessons and learning observed regularly across subject teams so that potential for improvement is quickly identified. Expertise is shared well within these subjects.

However, this use of systems to improve provision is not consistent across all subjects. For example, in humanities subjects the marking of written work is not checked regularly enough, so in some examples it is cursory. The quality of homework is often poor because it is either infrequently set or rather too easy. The application of the behaviour policy is uneven. The extent to which subject teams work with senior leaders to improve the academy and the education of students is not consistent.

The management board of governors continues to challenge and support senior leaders, and fulfils its role capably. The recording of meetings has improved so that progress targets are easier to monitor.

### **External support**

The academy sponsor has provided solid support in enabling the appointment of the current principal. It has arranged opportunities for staff to visit an outstanding academy, and provided specialist advisers to improve aspects of literacy, numeracy,

the curriculum, and provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Secure reliable and sufficiently extensive assessment throughout all subject areas.
- Ensure that all students are consistently challenged in class so that their learning is at the highest level of which they are capable.