

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 679 9169
Direct email: mathew.mitchell@serco.com



26 June 2014

Mr Mark Watts
Headteacher
Nottingham University Samworth Academy
Bramhall Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4HY

Dear Mr Watts

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Nottingham University
Samworth Academy**

Following my visit with John Peckham Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 24–25 June 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 the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

The academy may appoint NQTs because of the strength of leadership for induction and training, which includes support from the University of Nottingham.

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 Education Funding Agency (EFA), the DfE Academies Advisers Unit, the

Chair of the Local Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham.

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Strengthen teaching to good or better by:
 - eradicating the large proportion of inadequate teaching
 - providing staff with sharply focused coaching and training to address weaknesses and hold them to account to improve
 - improving marking and the use of individual targets, so students know what they are aiming for and how to improve their work
 - promoting the importance of homework and then ensuring that it is of high quality.

- Increase the rate of progress of all groups of pupils in all subjects by:
 - demonstrating higher expectations of what students should achieve by insisting on a high rate of work in every lesson
 - training teachers to use assessment information well to plan work that is tailored to meet the needs of all students and then check that they make good progress in lessons
 - holding teachers to account for giving disabled students and those who have special educational needs the help they require in lessons to overcome the barriers to learning that they experience
 - challenging the more-able students from the minute they walk into lessons to the end, so they are challenged to think harder and expected to produce work of a much higher quality.

- Improve the behaviour and safety of students by:
 - creating and implementing a strategic plan to reduce the exclusion rate and improve attendance
 - ensuring that teachers insist on much higher standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons
 - promoting spiritual and cultural development effectively through the curriculum.

- Strengthen leadership and governance at all levels by:
 - securing basic day-to-day management structures such as the timetable, so the academy runs smoothly
 - changing the staffing structure, so that it is fit for purpose and staff are rewarded appropriately for their teaching and leadership responsibilities
 - equipping leaders at all levels, initially senior leaders, with the necessary skills so that they can fulfil their responsibilities
 - establishing the purpose of the sixth form and then providing appropriate post-16 courses that meet the needs of students

- securing equality of opportunity for students by providing them with the courses, subjects and advice that they require to improve their future economic well-being
- ensuring that governors are much more rigorous in holding leaders to account for academy improvement
- making sure that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately to improve outcomes for those students it is intended for.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the academy. An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed 21 parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with senior and other leaders. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also interviewed the Chair of the Local Governing Body and a representative of one of the sponsors, The University of Nottingham. A number of the school's self-evaluation documents were scrutinised, including the updated school improvement plan, current assessment information, teaching and learning reviews and behaviour and safety logs. Inspectors met with groups of students from the main school and the sixth form. Students' workbooks were examined during lesson observations. Inspectors also observed students' behaviour during lunch and break times. The executive headteacher attended the final team meeting.

Context

Since the most recent monitoring inspection the previous acting head of school is now the substantive headteacher. Nine members of the teaching staff, including the heads of the English and science departments, have either resigned from their posts or have taken up positions in other schools. A member of the information and communication technology (ICT) department has relinquished his role to take up the post of data manager. Seventeen newly qualified teachers have been recruited to join the academy from September 2014. The leadership of humanities will be taken by a senior leader for 2014–15. Heads of the science and technology departments are due to take up their posts this term; the second in the English department has been promoted to head of department. The academy is in the process of restructuring its support staff structure. The local governing body has recruited an additional parent governor.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Considerable work has been undertaken by school leaders and other staff to ensure reliable assessments and good outcomes for the current Year 11 students. Projected forecasts for the summer examinations indicate that there will be a considerable improvement in the number of students achieving five GCSEs including English and mathematics compared to 2013. Expected progress in both English and mathematics is set almost to reach national averages. Science results are also predicted to improve. The proportion of students expected to achieve more than expected progress in both English and mathematics is well below national averages. Of concern is the continued wide gap between those eligible for pupil premium and those who are not; currently this gap in Year 11 means that these students are approximately 18 months behind their peers. The gap in Year 10 is no better. Comprehensive plans have been put into place, which are currently due for approval

at local governance level, to ensure that strategies are put into place to support disadvantaged students more effectively from September.

Progress at Key Stage 3 is not good. The restructuring of sets and ability bands has gone some way to address this concern, although many students are still not making the expected levels of progress year-on-year. Among other factors, their progress has been severely hindered by considerable instability in staffing across the school; this matter is set to be resolved in September when the academy will be fully staffed.

The sixth form outcomes are positive; those undertaking vocational courses are all achieving their expected targets. Students report that the quality of provision has much improved, which has led to them making better progress and enjoying their courses. However, provision for those who have not yet achieved a GCSE qualification in either English or mathematics is inadequate.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching across the academy is variable. While data is provided centrally about students' current and prior attainment, these are used with varying degrees of success by teachers to plan appropriate learning activities. Students' progress, seen in lessons and evidenced in workbooks in the core subjects, suggests that many students are not making enough progress. Work is often insufficiently matched to students' ability; this is especially true for the more-able and those with special educational needs. Much of this mismatch is due to a lack of use and understanding of students' prior attainment and current needs information. The progress of many students is also hindered by low expectations by some teachers which have led to scrappy work and poor presentation in their books. The quality of marking and feedback is also inconsistent; there is no clear policy that is followed. Some students report that in some subjects their work is often not marked for weeks, including homework.

There are some areas of good practice in the academy; teachers plan learning activities well, grouping students to maximise understanding by all and using well-crafted questions to help students to think for themselves. For example, in one geography lesson students were clearly accustomed to being challenged because they used their skills to ask intelligent questions of each other's work and of the topic about demographics they were studying. This led to whole-class engagement and high quality responses.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The proportion of sessions missed by students during this academic year is similar to 2013 and still well above national averages. One in ten Year 10 students has been absent from school since September. Boys and those supported by school action are

disproportionately represented in absence figures. Recent reforms of the management of attendance and improved family liaison arrangements are being put into place to address this concern. The number of fixed-term exclusions is decreasing because of more effective internal sanction provision. Academy leaders report that serious misconduct out of lessons, such as fighting, has been reduced. Students and staff agree that the school is a safer place.

Many students indicate that truancy from lessons during the school day is common; this indicates very poor attitudes to learning. During the first day of the inspection, 20 class registers were not completed using the school's electronic system. Monitoring of attendance and behaviour incidents have been not carried out robustly enough, although leaders have recently strengthened the administration of this area of academy work. Low-level disruption or disengagement by some students is frequent in lessons, although students report that they are able to 'get on with their work' better since new grouping by ability arrangements have been made. Many students do not show pride in their work or appearance, and staff do not rigorously enforce high standards in these areas. Staff report that behaviour is not good. Behaviour management systems have not been fully established or applied consistently, but leaders are in the process of agreeing an academy-wide set of 'non-negotiable' standards which is due to be launched in September.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher has established important structural changes to the academy; an improved timetable and coherent management structure means that improvement plans can now be executed more easily and successfully. Academy leaders have made a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. Inadequate teaching has been reduced and the proportion of good and better teaching has increased. Leaders are developing broader sets of evidence to judge the quality of teaching; judgements are no longer made just using direct observations. In one or two cases, such evidence has been used to support the coaching and development of teachers. However, the enormous turbulence in staffing this year has significantly limited the impact and implementation of this approach to teacher development. A consistent, whole-school approach to teaching and learning has not been established. Coaching and mentor support has been set up but it is too early to comment on the impact of this approach on the quality of teacher development. Data systems are still being developed but no clear strategy has been implemented; this has led to variable use and understanding by teachers of the information the school holds.

Subject leaders have received support from equivalent leaders within the Torch Academy Gateway Trust to help them standardise the assessments of students' work more effectively. They have carried out monitoring activities as part of the whole-academy quality assurance cycle; they do not, however, independently monitor the quality of teaching in any systematic way. They are developing their roles; for example, the head of one department has completed some training to develop her

lesson observation and feedback skills. Training for others is planned for this term and next. A new network of subject leaders has been established within the Torch Academy Gateway Trust called the 'Progress Board'; it aims to ensure greater consistency and reliability of students' assessment through the development of common tests in Key Stage 3. This provides valuable opportunities to share best practice.

The Chair of the Local Governing Body continues to provide important support and challenge to academy leaders through drawing upon his experience of working with other schools. A review of governance has helped to improve the way governors can hold academy leaders to account; each governor is linked to a senior leader and carries out purposeful visits to school regularly. They have ensured greater parental engagement by attending parent forums and more regular attendance at academy events, like parents' evenings.

Monthly 'Sponsor Health Checks' of teaching and learning, progress data, work scrutiny and behaviour for learning is planned from next term. In addition, fortnightly meetings across the partnership for headteachers, achievement leaders and pastoral leaders are being set up to ensure improvement in the quality of leadership at all levels; it is too early to comment on the impact of this work.

External support

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the sponsor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. The plans are detailed and appropriate. Sharp success criteria ensure that academy leaders can be effectively held to account. A clear strategy is also set out to keep parents regularly updated with the progress the academy is making towards the removal of special measures. The academy has made good use of consultancy support to drive up standards in Year 11 and help senior leaders develop their role more effectively.