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3 July 2014

Mr David Page  
Acting Principal  
Trinity Academy  
Church Balk  
Thorne, Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN8 5BY

Dear Mr Page

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

Following my visit with David Thompson and Clive Hurren, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 1 and 2 July 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 December 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 the academy is making reasonable progress toward the removal of special measures.

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

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy should consider very carefully if they wish to appoint newly qualified teachers and only to subject areas where appropriate support can be guaranteed.

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 and the Interim Director Children and Young People's Service for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**  
**Annex**

**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013.**

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is at least good by:
  - ensuring all teachers plan activities which meet the needs and interests of students
  - raising the aspirations and expectations of teachers so that they challenge students to make at least good progress and ensure students who are capable of achieving the highest grades do so
  - improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback so it clearly identifies what students need to do and improve their work and make better progress
  - allowing the students opportunities to act on the feedback they are given
  - ensuring curriculum provision supports student progress more effectively.
  
- Improve the behavior and attendance of students by:
  - eradicating disruptive behavior in lessons by providing students with work which challenges them, interests them and motivates them to make at least good progress
  - continuing to work with parents and carers to raise the level of attendance.
  
- Raise attainment overall, including in the sixth form, and especially in mathematics by:
  - accelerating the progress made by all students, focusing especially on the achievement made by boys, the most-able students and students supported by the pupil premium.
  - ensuring that the most-able students who are capable of achieving the highest grades do so.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and develop the role of leaders and managers at all levels by:
  - ensuring the development plan is clear about who is doing what, why they are doing it and the impact it will have on students' progress
  - holding middle leaders to account for the progress students make in their subjects and ensuring middle leaders hold their teachers to account also
  - providing middle leaders with opportunities to engage in monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken
  - focusing all actions on improving the amount of progress students make and raising the levels of attainment, including those in the sixth form
  - inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations about governance to the authority responsible for the academy.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 1 to 2 July 2014.**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed lessons and looked at students' books, often accompanied by members of the leadership team. They spoke with students during lessons, in formal groups and at social times. Inspectors met with the acting Principal, executive Principal, the Chair of the School Improvement Board (SIB) and the Chair of the Local Governing Body. Meetings were also held with other senior and middle leaders. Academy documents were scrutinised relating to the areas for improvement from the December 2013 section 5 inspection report. During the inspection, Year 13 and Year 11 students were taking public examinations and were not in the academy. Year 12 students were only present for one day of the inspection.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, three members of staff took up roles at senior leadership level. An internal appointment to the post of director of English has been made and they, together with the head of sixth form, have joined the senior team. Nine staff will leave at the end of the term and appointments have been made to all posts.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The data provided by academy leaders during the inspection show a picture of likely underachievement and declining standards in the national tests this year for students in Year 11. Interventions for these students, including a popular mathematics residential are likely to have made a difference to the outcomes for some students. However, the picture in mathematics is still of concern to leaders given the starting points for these students. In the key subjects of English and mathematics there is evidence of gaps closing for both boys and students supported by pupil premium (additional government funding). However, the most able students are not doing well enough.

Academy data for students in Year 10 and Year 9 suggest a more positive picture in English and mathematics compared to the situation for students at the same time last year and the national picture. Inspectors saw that there is challenge for different groups of students in some lessons, but the quality of this is very variable across and between subjects. Staffing and leadership difficulties in mathematics have hampered students' progress in this important subject.

Changes to the way students in the sixth form are recruited to subjects are having a positive effect. Consequently, more students than previously are likely, according to academy records, to reach the grades expected of them. There is, however, still a significant gap between the number of male students compared to the number of female students who reach the highest grades with female students doing better. Academy leaders are aware of this discrepancy and it is a priority for them.

## **The quality of teaching**

Inspectors observed a number of lessons and confirmed senior leaders' view that the quality of teaching in all subjects is very mixed and not strong enough to raise standards and progress for all students rapidly. However, there are some, limited, examples of strong practice where teachers plan lessons well so that students of different abilities are challenged and marking is constructive providing opportunities for students to respond regularly. Consequently, students are interested in their learning, behaviour is positive and they make progress.

A key weaker feature of many lessons is the limited challenge for students because not enough time is allowed so that they can discuss, write or research information in sufficient depth. Completing activities is more important in some lessons than the quality of work produced by students of all abilities, particularly the most able. In many lessons at all key stages, learning is closely directed by teachers. Few are prepared to take risks and see what students can do when working on their own or in small groups to investigate and solve problems. Students told inspectors that the amount of homework they get is very variable. Inspectors saw that this is the case and needs to be meaningful so that it helps students get better in different subjects.

Intervention activities are happening more regularly than previously because leaders have a better understanding of which students need them. Senior leaders agreed that consideration should be given to ensure that all curriculum time, including tutor time and assemblies, are used to best effect so that no learning time is wasted.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Although two year groups of students were not present during the monitoring inspection, observations by inspectors and discussions with students suggest that the raft of strategies put in place by senior leaders is having a positive impact. Students say that they know how to move around the building properly and why they need to be careful not to disrupt other students during the split lunch times. Inspectors saw that the great majority of students behave sensibly between and during lessons. When teaching is not of the best, some students can become restless and disengaged, ask silly questions and do not work well. This behaviour, students admitted, is more prevalent when they are being taught by supply teachers. There is, however, a strong downward trend in fixed-term exclusions, fewer students are persistently absent and attendance is improving. Despite these positive signs, persistent absence by students in Year 11 is too high and overall attendance by students in Year 13 is not good enough. Students talked happily with inspectors and those looking after Year 6 pupils, who were visiting the academy during the monitoring inspection, undertook their roles efficiently and were positive ambassadors for the academy.

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

Inspection evidence indicates that leadership at all levels is increasingly effective and beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the progress made by different groups of students. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is still a long way to go. Senior leaders, including those recently appointed, do not shirk from taking difficult decisions and make their expectations clear when monitoring provision throughout the academy. For example, support plans are in place so that teachers are aware how to improve their teaching and teachers' progress against these are checked regularly. However setting a time limit for this work does not happen and not all teachers have chosen to, or been able to move forward as leaders would wish. Nevertheless, there is evidence of some students making better progress.

It is appropriate that senior leaders get detailed information from regular lesson observations and scrutiny of students' books, so that they gain a precise picture about the quality of teaching throughout the academy. As a result, they are better placed than before to provide the correct level of support and challenge to individuals. Middle leaders are becoming aware of students' potential and the quality of teaching in their subject areas. They receive appropriate training to help them analyse data and to make and deliver clear judgements and feedback when observing lessons.

Governors continue to review their performance and identify and address their training needs regularly, including their understanding of the effective use of the pupil premium funds. Members of the SIB in particular, are providing appropriate levels of challenge and support to senior leaders from a well-informed position. They, together with the senior members of the leadership team, lead the drive for rapid but sustained improvement. The post-Ofsted action plan is now fit for purpose and is used by senior leaders as a key indicator by which to measure improvement.

### **External support**

Staff from other academies in the Emmanuel Schools Foundation, plus external consultants, continue to undertake observations and coaching work. Many of these activities are now being done by senior leaders as capacity is strengthened.

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the sponsor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that their statement of action is fit for purpose.