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1 July 2014

Mr Poulter  
Principal  
The Harefield Academy  
Northwood Way  
Harefield  
Uxbridge  
Middlesex  
UB9 6ET

Dear Mr Poulter

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Harefield Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a range of senior leaders, a sample of teachers and a non-teaching member of staff. I also spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the Trust Board. We discussed the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated along with other documents. These included pupil progress data, the outcomes of school monitoring activities, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of staff training. During my tour of the school with you, I spoke with some students and

looked at their books. I also looked at a small sample of students' homework planners.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, no teaching staff have left the school. However a number of staff will leave at the end of the summer term. A new director of boarding took up post at start of the summer term. New directors of learning in mathematics and English have been appointed and will take up post in September. Further new teachers in English and mathematics will take up post in September. All but one are experienced teachers. The Trust Board and the Principal have agreed a restructure of the senior leadership team with effect from September 2014.

## **Main findings**

The evidence from the visit shows that you have taken swift action since the last inspection. You have trained middle leaders how to check on the quality of teaching and have put in place training to improve teaching. You have ensured that middle leaders have been trained to understand and use assessment data to check pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, they are beginning to improve the quality of teaching in their areas. Teachers are now planning activities which challenge students better. Senior leaders oversee this monitoring work, as middle leaders develop their skills. For example, your expectations for marking and feedback are improving the learning students receive. You are now deploying skilled teachers to provide coaching to improve teaching, for example, in mathematics. You have improved the way students with special educational needs are supported. This includes providing teachers with regular updates and advice on how they can help them make good progress. You have attended training with governors to develop their skills in holding you and senior leaders to account.

You have taken prompt action to address the areas identified at inspection in the boarding provision. New recording books for the administration of medicines and tighter routines are in place to witness and record the use of medicines. The director of boarding maintains records of all training for staff. A clear system for recording behaviour has been put in place. The director of boarding makes a weekly scrutiny of records to identify patterns of behaviour. Staff use this information to address any issues that arise with students. As a consequence, behaviour has improved. The school reports that no serious behaviour incidents have been recorded in recent weeks. The director of boarding has introduced new ways for staff and students to work together. Students are now taking more responsibility and work with staff to agree how the house can be run. This is leading to students having a greater sense of belonging.

Students' behaviour seen during the tour of the school was positive. As a result, I saw students learning in a calm and orderly way during lessons. They work with

concentration. This is clearly an improvement on what was reported at section 5 inspection.

Governors meet regularly with you and senior leaders to check how well the school is addressing the areas for improvement. You provide them with a wide range of information about pupils' learning. They recognise that, previously, they did not have sufficient skills or information to hold senior leaders to account. As a result of recent training, they understand better what needs to be done to improve teaching. Governors use their financial skills to understand how pupil premium funding is spent. They have commissioned an external review, which should report shortly on the impact of this funding on achievement. They are attending an Ofsted seminar on good governance towards the end of term. Minutes of meetings show that, increasingly, they are prepared to ask you searching questions.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The Trust Board sets high expectations for the school to achieve the best for its students. It has provided direct support in facilitating changes in the leadership structure and additional staffing to secure improvements in English and mathematics.

The Association of School and College Leaders has trained staff on how to conduct lesson observations.

Governors fully support the links you have made with headteacher colleagues from local schools. This is leading to collaboration, for example in planning aspects of the new curriculum and sixth form development. This is broadening the curriculum and the range of learning experiences for students.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Academy Trust Board.

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**