

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

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Ms Debbie Lipkin
Interim Executive Principal
Nightingale Academy
34 Turin Road
London
N9 8DQ

Dear Ms Lipkin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Nightingale Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 11 September 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 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. The academy should take further action to:

- provide clear timelines and more precise indicators of success for particular aspects of the plan so that leaders and governors can judge the impact of each priority for improvement
- involve the governing body in the monitoring and evaluation of the action plan so that they can hold leaders to account and ensure the rapid improvement of the academy.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met

with a range of other staff, including the teaching and learning lead and the more-able co-ordinator, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the academy's sponsor. Together with a Vice Principal, we visited a range of lessons for short periods of time. I observed the behaviour of students at morning break. I evaluated the academy's action plan and examined other relevant documentation.

Context

Since the inspection in June 2014 there have been some changes in roles and responsibilities throughout the academy. A number of staff have left the academy for a variety of reasons, including redundancy. Due to the continued absence of the substantive Principal, the Interim Executive Principal continues to lead the academy for three days a week. A new Assistant Vice Principal joined the academy and her responsibilities include the leadership of mathematics and numeracy. Some changes to the academy buildings have also been made.

Main findings

In the short time since the last inspection, you have carried out a significant body of work to begin to address the points for improvement highlighted in the section 5 report. You have restructured the leadership team and created new positions of responsibility to focus on key aspects of improvement. This has led to improved communication, clear lines of responsibility and increased accountability. You have also utilised support from the sponsor to evaluate specific provision within the academy and to support middle leaders in their roles.

You have created a comprehensive plan for improvement that addresses both the areas for development indicated in the last inspection and those identified by the academy. However, the plan does not contain clear timescales for completion of its different elements. This will hinder the evaluation of progress toward identified goals. While the plan addresses the areas for development highlighted in the last inspection, these are not always made explicit enough. Careful consideration now needs to be given to the inclusion of realistic and clear timescales within your plan. Similarly, some indicators of success cited, particularly those relating to the quality of teaching, need to be more precise so that progress against them can be evaluated accurately. These amendments will enable governors to play an active role in monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of the plan.

Although it is too early to see the full impact of many of the changes you have initiated, there is some evidence that they are beginning to have impact. The improved use and analysis of data, coupled with frequent meetings to discuss the progress of students, help you to identify and act upon underachievement quickly. These meetings also include a specific focus on more-able students. The methodology that led to significant improvements in reading is now being applied to

improving writing throughout the academy and this is being led by a new team focussing on improving teaching and learning. This team plans to address the pressing need to provide real challenge for the more able. A new member of your leadership team is helping to improve numeracy across the academy and there are plans for a numeracy co-ordinator to be in post next term.

Two reviews of the provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs have been carried out by an external consultant in the few weeks since the last inspection. You have already made some changes in this area and more are planned. Governors and leaders need to consider urgently the actions to be taken in light of these reviews.

Since the inspection, the academy has had a renewed focus on improving behaviour. You have focussed on consistency of approach by all and staff report that this is having a positive impact. This is supported by observations of students around the academy. They now move in an orderly manner around the site and are respectful to one and other. A small minority of students are still not getting to lessons on time and this issue needs to be addressed.

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

External support

The academy reports that the external support it has received from the sponsor has been consistently good and is valued highly. The sponsor is currently supporting the academy in English, mathematics and in the area of special educational needs, and this is having a positive impact. This includes developing middle leaders so that they are able to improve the quality of teaching and achievement in their subject areas. The sponsor's regional representative has regular meetings with the academy and is aware of both the academy's strengths and areas for further development.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Enfield, the Education Funding Agency and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Sai Patel
Her Majesty's Inspector