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13 November 2014

Isobel Barron  
Principal  
Kingsmoor Academy  
Ployters Road  
Harlow  
CM18 7PS

Dear Mrs Barron

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingsmoor Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 12 November 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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:

- further develop systems to monitor and improve teaching and learning to ensure that leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the quality of teaching overtime which takes account of all aspects of teaching, learning and progress
- ensure that teachers consistently model accurate standard English, including when they write in pupils' books.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and the vice principal. I met two governors and a representative from the academy trust. I also met with the leaders of English and

mathematics. You and I visited lessons together, talked informally to pupils and looked at their books. I scrutinised your development plans and evaluated records of lesson observations and other monitoring activities. I scrutinised the record of safeguarding checks that are made on newly appointed staff.

## **Main findings**

You and your vice principal are determined to improve the academy quickly. You have the confidence of staff, governors and the academy trust. You have made explicit your higher expectations for teaching at the academy and set some whole academy procedures in place. Teachers are now much clearer about how work should be marked. They follow the academy's policy but the quality of marking still varies between year groups. Sometimes teachers' comments are not written in accurate English.

You and your vice principal visit lessons regularly to check the quality of teaching. You are training other leaders to evaluate teaching and learning by conducting joint observations with them. Leaders also check teachers' planning and look in pupils' books. Teachers receive feedback to help them improve and they know that leaders will follow up any points for improvement quickly to check that they have been addressed. You are gathering a lot of information about what is going well and what needs to improve. However, you are not drawing this information together well enough and using it in conjunction with pupils' progress data to gain an accurate view of teaching over time. Too much emphasis is placed on the results of lesson observations which can vary between visits.

You have introduced some changes to teaching across the academy in order to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils now have weekly opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real life problems in 'Prove it Friday' lessons. Regular spelling and grammar lessons, along with more frequent opportunities to write at length, are beginning to improve common weaknesses in writing.

When we visited classrooms, we noted that most pupils were working hard and focusing well. They were keen to talk about their work and explain what had gone before. However, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils still causes concern and sometimes disrupts lessons. You are seeking advice and training from beyond the academy to help teachers deal with behaviour issues well.

Governors receive detailed and helpful information from you and other leaders. They ask challenging questions, particularly about the progress pupils make. The academy's improvement plan is a useful working document, which governors use well to direct their work. Governors check that actions listed in the plan have taken place and they visit the academy to see the changes first hand. They follow this up by requesting information about the impact of these changes.

Pre-employment safeguarding checks are made and recorded diligently. You and members of the governing body periodically check that this work is done.

## **External support**

The academy trust provides useful and targeted support to improve teaching and leadership. The principal also draws on networks within the local authority for further guidance and support, when appropriate.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [[open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools