

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

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

Direct T: 0121 679 9153
Direct E: naik.sandhu@serco.com



21 November 2014

David Brunton
Headteacher
City Academy Norwich
299 Bluebell Road
Norwich
NR4 7LP

Dear Mr Brunton

No formal designation monitoring inspection of City Academy Norwich

Following my visit to your academy on 20 November 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 behaviour at the academy.

The inspection was an unannounced monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

I considered a range of evidence including:

- observations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of students' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with students
- documentary evidence
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the academy's previous inspection.

Context

City Academy Norwich is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The number of students on roll is 823. There are currently no students in the sixth form. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority

ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is slightly below average. An above-average proportion of students are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority). The proportion of students who have special educational needs is above average.

You are due to retire at the end of December 2014, and a new headteacher has already been appointed to start in January 2015.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since the previous inspection in September 2011 the behaviour of students has declined. This is due largely to an increase in low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons. Although I saw some students remain fully engaged in their learning and on task, I saw too many incidences of students disrupting their own learning and that of their peers. Examples of this behaviour included: not paying attention to their teacher, sitting in lessons with their head on the desk, laughing out loud when their peers got an answer wrong, rocking backwards and forwards on chairs, chewing gum, doodling in their books, refusing to participate in group and pair work and playing around with classroom equipment such as mini whiteboards.

In one physical education lesson, the teacher and I saw a group of girls deliberately pushing each other off a bench during a team building activity. Students with whom I met told me that around 50% of their lessons are affected by low-level disruptive behaviour.

Over time, the proportion of students excluded from the academy has been too high. Following the previous inspection, the proportion of students who were excluded from the academy increased, while it decreased nationally. Exclusion data have increased in 2014–2015 compared to the previous year. Reasons include serious breaches of behaviour such as fighting and verbal abuse of teachers. The proportion of students placed in internal inclusion has decreased compared to similar periods over the last two years.

Staff are present in corridors as students move around the academy. Senior staff are on duty to welcome students as they arrive in the morning and to bid them farewell at the end of the day. However, some teachers do not always arrive on time to their lessons which results in students having to wait in the corridors. Consequently, the start of the lesson is delayed.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring that any student who is not wearing the correct uniform is challenged. Members of staff often sit with students in the academy canteen for lunch. Students queue patiently for their food and move around the canteen sensibly. Members of the catering staff confirm this behaviour is typical. Students interact with each other well during their free time.

Students who present the most challenging behaviour are taught through the academy's alternative provision, the 'Hub', which is located in a separate building within the school grounds. Some students have attended this provision for a considerable amount of time. Students who are taught in the 'Hub' report that their behaviour has improved, although there are sometimes serious incidents involving fighting and the use of bad language which results in them being excluded from the

academy for a fixed period of time. The 'Hub' is helping some students, but not always changing the worst behaviour.

Despite weaknesses in tackling poor behaviour, particularly in lessons, there are also some successes. A group of students with whom I met, all of whom had presented challenging behaviour and been excluded from the academy, told me that the academy has provided some effective support to modify their behaviour. This support included one-to-one sessions with counsellors, pastoral support plans and meetings with parents and carers. As a result, some of these students have improved both their attitudes to learning and their attendance.

Although leaders convey a clear message that it will not be tolerated, bullying occurs in the academy. Worryingly, students told me that social networking sites are being used to victimise individual students in the academy. The academy's police officer has been made aware of this.

Although there is a consistent approach to managing attendance, the approach to managing behaviour hasn't taken into account low level disruption and has not been successful in improving behaviour. Students are clear about the systems in place for rewarding good behaviour and dealing with behaviour which is unacceptable. At the start of the inspection, I observed a number of students arriving late to school. These students were aware of the consequences of being late and knew they would have to stay behind after school as a sanction.

The academy re-launched its behaviour management system in September 2014, underpinned by its 'RESPECT' campaign which was produced by both students and staff. This needs to be consistently applied, and, as yet, it is too early to see the impact. Students are reminded about the academy's expectations for behaviour through assemblies and use of tutor time. During the inspection, one student was publically praised in an assembly for demonstrating good behaviour during the week.

Over time, the proportion of students who have been persistently absent from school has been almost twice the national average. Leaders analyse behaviour and attendance matters by student groups and present regular reports to the governing body. Students who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium funding attend less regularly than their peers. Students' attendance is steadily improving, but parents and carers continue to take their children on holiday during the school term. Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 attend school less than those in Years 7 and 8. The proportion of students who are persistently absent from school, although falling, is still above average.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure teaching staff are able to identify what constitutes low-level disruptive behaviour and they are equipped with strategies to tackle this confidently.
- Reduce the proportion of students who are excluded from the academy for fixed periods of time.
- Reduce the proportion of students who are persistently absent.

- Ensure that students and parents are made aware of the dangers and risks involved in the misuse of social networking sites.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector