

Serco Inspections  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 679 9153  
**Direct email:** [naik.sandhu@serco.com](mailto:naik.sandhu@serco.com)

28 November 2014

Alex Thomas  
Principal  
Capital City Academy  
Doyle Gardens  
London  
NW10 3ST

Dear Mr Thomas

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Capital City Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 27 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 the actions which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in January 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Director of Children's Services for Brent, the DfE Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

David Storrie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Make sure that teaching is helping all students to learn by:
  - checking that teachers know how to use information on students' different abilities and starting points to plan work that students can understand
  - making students practise and develop their reading, writing and speaking skills in every subject, and checking to see how it is making a difference
  - training additional adults in how best to develop students' reading and writing skills, drawing on existing good practice in mathematics and science.
  
- Raise achievement for all students in English, especially those eligible for additional funding by:
  - ensuring that all teachers can check the levels students' are working at accurately, and providing good quality training if they need support
  - making sure that teachers know which features of their teaching help students to learn best
  - checking that activities provided for students eligible for support help them to make rapid progress and catch up with other students.
  
- Make sure that senior leaders and governors tackle weaknesses urgently and effectively by:
  - checking the performance of leaders of subjects and teachers against how much progress students make and how well they develop their reading and writing skills
  - taking immediate action if performance is not good enough, checking whether the action is making a difference and looking for an alternative if it is not working
  - making sure that governors challenge senior and middle leaders by asking them to provide clear evidence to support their evaluations
  - undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved

undertaking an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 27 November 2014**

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your vice principal and your assistant principals. I met with four heads of department and three members of the board of trustees. I spoke to pupils during the school day and met a group of pupils from Year 7 to Year 13. I made brief visits to a range of departments with you and your leaders to observe students at work and observe teaching. I scrutinised students' books and homework while visiting classrooms. I evaluated a range of documentation, including records of the monitoring of teaching, information about students' achievement, attendance and behaviour records, external reviews of the governing body and evidence of the academy's use of the pupil premium funding.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring visit, 17 teachers, a vice-principal and assistant principal left the academy at the end of the summer term. 11 teachers joined the academy at the beginning of this academic year. The heads of department for humanities and mathematics, a vice-principal for teaching and learning were new to role in September 2014.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the academy**

The principal, senior leaders and trustees have continued to ensure improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in the English department. The expectations of staff and students have risen since the last monitoring inspection. A new approach to the marking of students' work has been introduced and this is ensuring that most students get higher quality feedback about their learning and progress, particularly in the English department. High quality feedback is becoming more established throughout the academy. However, some marking still does not provide students' with sufficient information to fully develop their subject knowledge.

A new code of conduct for students' behaviour was introduced in September 2013. The effectiveness of the code has been monitored by leaders and it is helping to improve students' behaviour. Exclusions have fallen further since the start of the academic year and students say that good behaviour is consistently rewarded with 'merit points'.

Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their monitoring of the quality of teaching and students' achievement. A greater range of evidence is used to evaluate teaching in the academy. Leaders are making checks on the progress of students in lessons, student books, and achievement information. This is leading to a more accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses because judgements are based on a wider range of the academy's work. Where teaching is found to be less than good over time, support and challenge are provided quickly to improve student achievement. Leaders' higher expectations of staff are leading to improvements in

the consistency of teaching and feedback to students. Teachers are supportive of senior leaders and the changes they have introduced.

Student achievement information is used regularly by staff to monitor the progress of their students, and teachers have a clear understanding of which students are on track to make at least expected progress. However, across the academy there is not a sharp enough focus on the proportions of students who are making greater than expected progress in Key Stage 3 and 4. Following the pupil premium review, leaders have focussed more robustly on ensuring that eligible pupils do as well as their peers nationally. Leaders agree that they now need to ensure that the support these students receive helps them to achieve as well as their peers in school.

Retention rates in the sixth form are improving and students are receiving better feedback and guidance from teachers on how to improve their learning. Achievement in the sixth form remains variable across subjects for AS and A level courses. Leaders are steadily securing better progress by students but there remains some way to go to ensure that all students are making good progress. Leaders are beginning to monitor students' progress more frequently in order to eradicate underachievement and reduce variations in achievement between student groups and different subjects. Students are continuing to achieve well in vocational courses.

Trustees have used the review of governance to strengthen their support and challenge to senior leaders. The executive committee is thorough in its scrutiny of the academy's action plan and the progress being made against the academy's plans for improvement. Trustees have higher expectations of senior and middle leaders and are making sure they are held to account regularly.

### **Strengths in the academy's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The academy is continuing to improve GCSE results, and 2014 results show an improvement in students' attainment and progress.
- The Board of Trustees is providing excellent challenge to the academy's leaders and managers. This is helping to ensure that the school continues to take effective action in improving the areas identified at the last section 5 inspection.
- Expectations of middle leaders have been significantly raised. There is now an expectation that heads of department will monitor the teaching and learning in their department. Teachers are held to account for the progress of their students.
- Teachers are making better use of information about students' achievement. This is helping to ensure that work is more closely matched to the ability of the students.
- Students are demonstrating a greater pride in the work. Their books are well-kept and presented. Most students are keen to improve the quality of their written work.
- The quality of students' writing is significantly improved in the English department. Students are expected to plan and consider their writing before

beginning a task. Students are encouraged to consider the impact of their language and to make use of more ambitious vocabulary when writing.

- Middle leaders have been provided with better training and professional development. They are much more involved in monitoring students' progress, sharing good practice in teaching and in identifying what needs to be improved. A programme to support and develop teaching started in September. Since September all newly qualified teachers are enrolled in this training and this is helping to ensure that new teachers quickly understand the expectations of the academy.
- The academy's new behaviour policy is consistently used by staff. Classrooms have a more purposeful atmosphere and rewards are used to reinforce and praise good work and behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are providing effective support for student' learning. They are helping to plan provision for the students they work with as well as assessing their progress, and this helps to ensure work is adapted to meet the needs of individual students.
- Support for students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) continues to be very effective. Students who have little or no understanding of English receive specialist teaching which ensures that they quickly learn sufficient English to be taught in classes for their age. The academy helps them to develop an understanding of British society and traditions.

### **Weaknesses in the academy's approaches to securing improvement:**

- There is still too much variation in students' progress in AS and A level courses.
- Students' from vulnerable groups and disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make the accelerated progress required to help them catch up with their peers.
- Leaders are not monitoring closely enough the proportions of students making greater than expected progress or achieving the top grades of A\* and A in GCSE courses. Some students still need more challenge to make more rapid progress.
- Not all marking is sufficiently focused upon improving and deepening students' subject knowledge.

### **External support**

The academy's external consultant has provided challenge to the Principal and trustees. This ensures that the trustees are improving their effectiveness and staying focused on their strategic role. Through regular visits to the academy the consultant has provided good support to the academy by checking and challenging the academy's action plan and progress regularly. Leaders have rightly chosen to reduce the level of support provided by this consultant as the academy is becoming more self-sustaining and the capacity of middle leaders is more secure.