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5 December 2014

Mr David Page
Acting Principal
Trinity Academy
Church Balk
Thorne
Doncaster
DN8 5BY

Dear Mr Page

Special measures monitoring inspection of Trinity Academy

Following my visit with Gina White, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Alexandra Hook, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 3 and 4 December 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 third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. 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 special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy should only appoint newly qualified teachers where appropriate support for them can be guaranteed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Interim Director Children and Young People's Service for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013.

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is at least good by:
 - ensuring all teachers plan activities which meet the needs and interests of students
 - raising the aspirations and expectations of teachers so that they challenge students to make at least good progress and ensure students who are capable of achieving the highest grades do so
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback so it clearly identifies what students need to do and improve their work and make better progress
 - allowing the students opportunities to act on the feedback they are given
 - ensuring curriculum provision supports student progress more effectively.

- Improve the behaviour and attendance of students by:
 - eradicating disruptive behaviour in lessons by providing students with work which challenges them, interests them and motivates them to make at least good progress
 - continuing to work with parents and carers to raise the level of attendance.

- Raise attainment overall, including in the sixth form, and especially in mathematics by:
 - accelerating the progress made by all students, focusing especially on the achievement made by boys, the most able students and students supported by the pupil premium.
 - ensuring that the most able students who are capable of achieving the highest grades do so.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and develop the role of leaders and managers at all levels by:
 - ensuring the development plan is clear about who is doing what, why they are doing it and the impact it will have on students' progress
 - holding middle leaders to account for the progress students make in their subjects and also ensuring middle leaders hold their teachers to account
 - providing middle leaders with opportunities to engage in monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken
 - focusing all actions on improving the amount of progress students make and raising the levels of attainment, including those in the sixth form
 - inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of

leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations about governance to the authority responsible for the academy.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2014.

Evidence

Inspectors, often accompanied with members of the senior leadership team, observed lessons and looked at students' work in their books. Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection in December 2013. Students were spoken to formally by inspectors, during lessons and at social times. Inspectors held meetings with the acting Principal, Executive Principal, senior and middle leaders. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Local Governing Board.

Context

Eleven teachers left at the end of the summer term 2014 and seven teachers took up their posts on 1 September 2014.

Achievement of students at the academy

Information provided by senior leaders during the previous monitoring inspection which anticipated underachievement and declining standards for students in Year 11 in 2014 was correct. Teachers had for the most part predicted correctly how well students would do in their public examinations in English and mathematics. Pleasingly, there is very little difference between the progress made by boys and girls in English; also the gap between students supported by pupil premium (additional government funding) and other students closed. This was due mainly to students supported by pupil premium doing better than before. This confirms leaders' view that changes to the English curriculum and additional support are having a positive effect on these students.

The picture is not as positive in mathematics with the gap between students supported by pupil premium and others still evident, especially for more able students. Lesson observations and academy data indicate that over one third of the current Year 11 students have not made expected progress in mathematics. This is an improvement compared to this time last year, but not good enough. Across a number of subjects, more able students are not making enough progress given their average starting points. This was confirmed during observations in class and when inspectors looked at students' books.

There is an improving trend in results for students in both Year 12 and Year 13. The gender gap closed significantly in 2014, but the performance of students supported by pupil premium and those who are more able is still an area of concern. Several sixth form students retook English and mathematics in 2014. Two thirds of these

students gained a grade C in English but noticeably fewer attained that level in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

The weaker features of lessons seen during the previous monitoring inspection are still evident and result in students being given insufficient challenge in several subjects. As a result, the progress students of all abilities, particularly the most able, make is limited. Discussions with senior leaders after they observed lessons with inspectors show that leaders have a secure understanding of where learning is not good enough. The quality of marking and feedback provided to students is improved and students showed inspectors examples of how they have responded to questions and comments written by their teachers.

There are, however, too many lessons which are not planned properly so that students of all abilities are challenged and given work that suits their needs. Too often, students are given the same task to do and some enabled to try something harder once this is completed. Where teachers adapt the intended sequence of tasks during a lesson because of student needs, then learning proceeds well and progress is rapid.

Senior leaders have started to make well-considered changes to the curriculum offered in all year groups. Students in Key Stage 3 spend longer studying the key subjects of English and mathematics in Year 7 than in Year 8. This is to ensure they are better prepared for future study as they get older. Schemes of work have been rewritten, for example in mathematics, so that the subject is taught sequentially and activities are covered less randomly than previously. Changes have also been made to the subjects offered in the sixth form. This has been in response to student choice and the quality of teaching provided.

Behaviour and safety of students

Students behave sensibly around the academy and told inspectors that they know what is and is not expected of them. The consistent approach to managing behaviour during social times and between lessons is evident and a recent behaviour review undertaken by an external consultant suggests that students support this view. There are still some times within lessons when low-level disruption takes place. This is because students are not challenged sufficiently or not all staff are implementing the 'do it now' routine at the beginning of lessons so that no learning time is wasted.

Leaders continue to check attendance frequently and the weaknesses seen during the previous monitoring inspection are no longer evident. Compared to the same period last year attendance is better in the sixth form.

New initiatives for students who require additional help have started this term. They provide focused support to meet individual needs, are well staffed and are welcomed by parents and those students who attend.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The acting Principal, supported well by other senior leaders has a strong understanding of the vital need to secure sustained improvements at a more rapid pace than currently. Senior leaders are working hard to make sure that all staff recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all students do as well as they can. Since the previous monitoring inspection, the number of staff who are not doing this has fallen, but there are still some, particularly but not exclusively in the mathematics department, who do not share this vision and expectation.

Senior leaders, and increasingly so middle leaders, gather a range of information regarding the quality of teaching and learning. This evidence is used to provide appropriate coaching. Ensuring that this coaching is appropriate and enables teachers to teach better lessons which allow students to make stronger progress is the next step for leaders to undertake. Senior leaders recognise that student views are important and these are currently underdeveloped.

Middle leaders better understand their roles and responsibilities than at the time of the previous monitoring inspection. During discussion with inspectors they described how they are held to account by senior leaders, given support and coaching so that they understand how to improve and evaluate provision in their departments. However, in some departments, not always do the leaders in their evaluations make the link well enough between performance information and the quality of teaching.

The post-Ofsted action plan is reviewed regularly, shared with governors so all leaders have a better understanding of the challenges still faced by the academy as well as appreciating success. Training for governors is regular and minutes of their meetings indicate that detailed discussions take place as they challenge leaders effectively.

External support

A number of external consultants and staff from the Emmanuel Schools Foundation continue to review and provide coaching within different departments and for all staff. For example, changes to the way teachers mark books and how students respond was monitored recently to provide leaders with an external view. Senior leaders intend that this work will continue.

Recently, the acting Principal is beginning to forge links with other secondary schools in the Doncaster area to consider how they can work together in different areas.