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Will Scott
Sir John Gleed School
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Dear Mr Scott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sir John Gleed School

Following my visit with Deirdre Duignan Her Majesty's Inspector and Anna Fisher, Additional Inspector to your academy on 3–4 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 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 not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

Having given the matter due consideration, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint up to two newly qualified teachers on condition that they are personally and closely mentored by a senior leader with responsibility for improving the quality of teaching in the academy.

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 Academies Advisers Unit, the Education Funding Agency, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely
Ian McNeilly

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what their students can achieve in lessons
 - track the progress of different groups of students in comparison to the progress of all students and take effective action to narrow any gaps this identifies
 - make effective use of information about what students know and can do when planning lessons and ensure these are appropriate for the needs of all students in the class
 - consistently provide work which is accessible to students of different abilities and particularly for those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language
 - plan lessons that capture students' interest and help them learn at a brisk pace
 - regularly set and assess homework mark students' work frequently and provide them with regular and specific feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Take immediate action to improve students' behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring safeguarding procedures meet requirements as a matter of urgency ensuring
 - bullying and homophobic behaviour are quickly eliminated
 - establishing an agreed view of what constitutes good behaviour and how it will be managed in and out of lessons, ensuring this is shared and supported by all staff and students
 - ensuring all staff contribute to managing students' behaviour so that it that the school is a calm, purposeful place in which students feel safe in and out of lessons
 - improving students' attendance and reducing persistent absence by working closely with parents, and also with the CfBT Schools Trust to identify techniques used successfully in other schools.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body must gain the trust and confidence of the staff and the community by:
 - establishing monitoring procedures which accurately evaluate the quality of the school's work
 - ensuring the outcomes of these checks are used to plan effective actions which quickly secure improvements in behaviour, teaching and achievement
 - improving the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of all students

- strengthening the leadership and management of provision for students with special educational needs by providing these staff with more training and resources
 - ensuring the governing body is better informed about parents' concerns, how well students behave, the quality of teaching and how the school is performing, so that it can hold the school properly to account and play a full part in driving its improvement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 3-4 December 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of academy, the executive headteacher, the education director from the academy sponsor: the CfBT Schools Trust (CST) and four members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors. Inspectors observed the learning taking place in 46 lessons, 15 of them jointly with senior leaders.

Context

Nine teachers have left the academy since the previous monitoring inspection in July, including the head of mathematics. Further to this, another seven long-term supply teachers no longer work at the academy. A teacher who was already a member of staff has been appointed head of mathematics in an acting capacity. The head of science will leave the academy at the end of this term; a permanent replacement has yet to be appointed. Five teachers who have previously worked at the academy on a supply basis have been appointed permanently. Four teachers are new to the academy. The senior leadership team has been re-structured and these changes will take effect from next month.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The reason the academy has been judged not to be making enough progress towards the removal of special measures is because of the underachievement of its students, as evidenced most clearly by the poor examination outcomes of the most recent cohort of Year 11 students. While improvements have clearly been made in many areas of the academy, and particularly so since Easter this year, they were not enough to compensate for the historic inadequate teaching this group of students had experienced, a situation which was exacerbated by considerable staff instability.

Only one in three Year 11 students achieved five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics; this represents a decline from 2013 and this is below the minimum expectations of the government. Slightly more than half of last year's Year 11 students made the progress expected of them in mathematics; slightly less than half achieved this measure in English. Underachievement was notable in several subject areas, particularly in science and in some design and technology courses.

However, there was good achievement in art, food technology and community languages. The vocational sixth form remains an area of strength.

A major concern, as acknowledged by the academy's senior leaders, is that the tracking of student progress was inaccurate and therefore the level of

underachievement was not predicted. This was in spite of academy leaders ensuring that teachers' assessments and data were externally verified. The latter action clearly did not work and senior leaders are taking steps to improve the quality of data. A new, much-improved system for tracking students' progress is already being used by senior leaders though this does not address the quality of the data itself.

The quality of teaching

As noted at the previous monitoring inspection, the quality of teaching is improving over time. The planning of lessons is a strength; scrutiny of plans submitted showed an impressive level of detail. Lessons generally have a clear direction in terms of the sequence of activities which build on prior learning and, where applicable, the activities are clearly linked to assessments.

The good relationships between students and their teachers have a positive effect on the progress that is made.

Teachers have information on the ability levels of their students. However, as not all of this is accurate it cannot be used to best effect to improve rates of progress.

Some very good examples of effective questioning were observed during the visit, though this was not common. Marking is carried out regularly though this is still an area of development for the academy as the impact of the written feedback is inconsistent; some teachers insist on students responding to the comments made and others do not.

Homework is set regularly but it is not always used to best effect to develop and extend students' learning. It is not always directly linked to what students have learned in class.

There is some very good practice in the academy. In order to improve the consistency of good quality teaching, and increase the amount of teaching that is exciting, engaging and challenging, best practice should be shared more widely across the academy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The most marked improvement in the academy since it was inspected in April 2013 is seen in the behaviour and safety of students. The academy's current Year 11 students, who were in the school when standards of behaviour were unacceptably low, speak very positively about how things are so much better in this regard.

Students behave very well when moving round the academy site. Students in each year group have their own allocated place to seek pastoral support should they require it.

Low-level disruption in lessons is now uncommon. This is an improvement on the behaviour at the time of the previous full inspection. However, in non-practical subjects, students are not sufficiently engaged in all lessons. For behaviour to be judged as good, students need to be encouraged to take a more active role in learning. This is seen in lessons which include practical activities; in these, students are given a great deal of independence and they respond to this responsibility very well.

Internal and external exclusions are reducing, as are the number of recorded behaviour incidents; the latter have reduced by more than half in a year.

Attendance is improving, supported by a new rewards system which students have responded well to. The academy's attendance figures for 2014 were better than those for 2013; the figures for the current academic year are an improvement on the same period last year.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The appointment of an executive headteacher in April has had a positive effect on the academy and he has made a direct contribution to improving it. Part of this has been through offering support and guidance to the head of academy. Importantly, both of these senior leaders, while already helping to secure some significant improvements, are well aware that there is much work to do.

A re-structuring of the senior leadership team has taken place with a view to better addressing the academy's areas for improvement. As this does not take effect until January, no impact can yet be judged.

A key improvement has been to reduce the instability of staffing; there are now considerably fewer supply teachers working in the academy than at the time of the previous monitoring visit.

Significant investment has been made in terms of improving the quality of teaching in the academy. Twenty-nine teachers have been trained to be peer coaches; 10 middle leaders are currently undertaking the National Professional Qualification in Middle Leadership. This will contribute to senior leaders' plans to make middle leaders more effective in their roles.

All members of staff with a leadership role are aware that progress data has not been accurate, despite the external verification processes that have been undertaken. This is a major area of development for the academy.

Members of staff have divergent opinions when asked about the quality of senior leadership. Part of the reason for this is that senior leaders have not been as clear as

they need to be when communicating the academy's values and ethos. Senior leaders accept this and have plans to fully address this in January when the re-structured senior leadership team takes effect.

The academy's older students speak very positively about the improvements they have seen in recent months, particularly in behaviour and in the quality of teaching. They appreciate the fact that both the executive headteacher and the head of academy undertake duty several times a day; students feel that both these leaders, as well as several other members of staff, are committed and approachable.

Since the previous monitoring visit, two governors have left the governing body. Two governors have had safeguarding training. In response to the unexpected level of underachievement in the summer examinations, governors undertook a detailed analysis of the results and this has made them better informed about subject-specific issues.

Meetings of the governing body and its committees are much more focused on academic standards; the former 'Rapid Improvement Board' has been merged with the governing body to support this new approach and to avoid duplication of necessary accountability work. In keeping with this, two middle leaders have been invited to each of the two most recent governor meetings so that they can explain the achievement levels in their subjects and be held to account for them. This has made governors more informed and more effective.

Governors appreciate senior leaders' recent actions to make pupil progress data much more accessible, and this had led to more effective questioning to these same leaders from governors. The 'Care, Support and Guidance' committee has had a positive impact on improving students' behaviour and attendance; governors visit the academy to better understand students' experiences.

External support

The most effective external support for the academy comes through the work of the experienced and knowledgeable executive headteacher, who is an employee of CST. The appointment, in April, of an education director for the trust was a necessary and important development which has helped make the sponsor's support more effective.

In September, CST's education director organised a meeting of the headteachers of all eight of the trust's secondary schools with a view to offering challenge and support, as applicable, and to provide the opportunity for senior leaders to share good practice. As a result, the academy sponsor is now in a better position to understand how to support the academy, though such a basic and fundamental strategy should have been used well before this point.

The sponsor's education director has become a governor of the academy in order to make himself better informed about the support that is needed.

In October, CST held professional development days for heads of English, mathematics and science. It is too early to judge the impact of this, though feedback from attendees was positive.

The trust plans to appoint lead teachers of English, mathematics and science who will be seconded to their academies, including Sir John Gleed School, on a part-time basis in order to support necessary improvement work. It is important that this support is made available to the academy as soon as practically possible, and particularly so in science.