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16 January 2015

Mr Matthew Partington  
Principal  
Goole High School Academy of Excellence  
Centenary Road  
Goole  
DN14 6AN

Dear Mr Partington

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Goole High School Academy of Excellence**

Following my visit with Clive Hurran and Sophie Gillies, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 14 and 15 January 2015, 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 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.

I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 Director of Children, Family and Schools for the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Cathryn Kirby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects from Years 7 to 13 so that it is consistently good or better and accelerates the rate of progress of all groups of students, by ensuring that:
  - information about the levels at which students work is used carefully to plan activities that challenge them accurately, interest them and enable them to reach their potential
  - teaching builds up students' knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they broaden their learning and can apply what they know
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and quantity of students' work, including very regular opportunities to write at length, and in presentation, spelling and grammatical accuracy
  - development of students' literacy and numeracy are consistently incorporated into all learning, based on a whole-school policy that all staff follow.
  
- Improve students' behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance throughout the academy, including that of sixth-form students, by making sure that:
  - all staff have high expectations of students' behaviour and attitudes to learning, supported by consistent use of the behaviour policy
  - all students understand the link between attendance and progress and the importance prospective employers give to good attendance
  - all students have individual attendance targets, which are constantly reviewed, with a minimum target of 95%
  - all staff fully understand the link between the quality of teaching and students' attitudes to learning and ensure that teaching engages students and motivates them.
  
- Urgently strengthen the impact of leadership and management across the academy in supporting good achievement, by ensuring that:
  - leaders at all levels have full accountability for the impact of their individual responsibilities on the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour, and check their impact regularly and rigorously
  - careers information, education and guidance is planned carefully across the academy to enable students to develop the necessary knowledge to make informed choices about their future, and skills in preparing for the world of work, including work experience
  - the governing body has a full and accurate understanding of the performance of the academy so that it is able to hold leaders fully to account.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 January 2015**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the Chair and other members of the Interim Executive Committee and the Chief Executive of the Wakefield City Academy Trust (WCAT). Inspectors spent much of their time in classrooms observing teaching and learning often accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team.

### **Context**

Significant change has taken place since the previous monitoring inspection in June 2014. The multi academy trust, WCAT, has formally taken charge of the academy's leadership and management. The Principal is new to post. The roles and responsibilities of the assistant principals have been revised since the previous monitoring inspection; two of these postholders are new to the academy. A significant number of new teachers have joined the academy since September 2014. English, science and mathematics departments have new subject leaders. An Interim Executive Committee has managed matters relating to governance and transition to a newly established governing body is imminent.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Unvalidated performance data for 2014 were available to inspectors at this monitoring visit. The gap narrowed between the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, at GCSE in the academy compared to the national figure. Higher proportions of 16-year-olds made expected progress in English and in mathematics moving these figures broadly in line with the national average. Achievement for all students across their best eight GCSE grades dipped compared to the national picture, reflecting the wide variability in subject performance. Boys' and disadvantaged students' achievement dipped relative to similar groups nationally. Sixth-form results for academic courses were disappointing and poor for AS level. In contrast, vocational courses yielded better outcomes with a good proportion of students meeting their target grades.

In lessons, improved attitudes to learning and greater engagement with set work are helping move achievement in the right direction.

### **The quality of teaching**

Since the last monitoring inspection the overall quality of teaching has improved. Inspectors focused their observations on: challenge; engagement; attitudes to learning; and the quality of marking. They also looked at how well teaching meets the needs of students at different points in learning in the same class.

Students' attitudes to learning and their engagement with classwork have seen the greatest improvement. Students themselves are very clear about this change. Providing challenge in lessons and meeting different needs show a more mixed picture. Inspectors saw some good work in both regards but this is not sufficiently widespread. The new teaching group presents one opportunity through which to accelerate improvement in these key aspects of teaching. Inspectors' scrutiny of English and science books showed that marking quality and feedback, and students' presentation over time, have all improved. Marking generally has a stronger focus on supporting literacy than does teaching in lessons where some easy chances to apply the literacy policy are missed.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Since the last monitoring inspection behaviour has improved. The use of fixed-term exclusion has fallen as a result of sharper policy and practice that is better understood and applied more consistently. Students themselves described to inspectors their experiences in lessons currently and recognise how changes to teaching have improved behaviour. On occasions where students looked bored, a lack of challenge or unsuitably pitched work is often the reason. Students feel safe in school. A small matter around the compliance of records relating to safeguarding will be followed up by a drop-in visit from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors before the end of the spring term.

A notable reduction in persistent absence has been driven by stronger links with families, raised expectations and well-managed 'inclusion' provision. That said, attendance on day one of this monitoring inspection for Years 7 to 11 was lower than usual. Sixth-form attendance lags behind the rest of the academy and on day two was unacceptably low for Year 13 at 76.5%.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Since assuming control WCAT has acted swiftly and with high impact. Changes to leadership roles and responsibilities are linked to new systems and structures at operational and strategic levels. The Principal and senior members of WCAT are absolutely clear about what still needs to be done. The challenge for them just over a year into special measures is to maintain the momentum of change, with continued improvement in teaching quality a firm priority.

Inspectors noted the calm, welcoming atmosphere. Actions taken by leaders have accelerated improvements in behaviour and persistent absence. Staff engaged willingly in dialogue with inspectors and senior leaders about strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and the large majority are keen to develop weaker aspects of their practice. The impact of strategies to engage students more strongly in learning activities is evident in many classrooms. The views of senior leaders and inspectors aligned closely during joint observations of teaching. The next step for the

academy is to iron out weaknesses and spread the most effective practice so that it becomes typical.

The sixth form remains a significant concern. In its present form it is not fit for purpose. For the sake of students it is a matter of urgency that the 'big questions' noted in the previous monitoring letter about the future of the sixth form and its provision are addressed.

### **External support**

The capacity provided by WCAT has been crucial in achieving the judgement of reasonable progress. The impact of new governance arrangements implemented by the trust on staffing at every level is easy to see. Senior leaders of the trust have provided valuable expertise in school improvement at a strategic level and rolled up their sleeves to engage at an operational level; for example, by checking what happens in classrooms for themselves or providing the specialist support to help drive improvements in teaching and behaviour. Members of the trust have attended meetings with parents and students as part of the successful drive to improve attendance.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Tackle well-founded concerns relating to the effectiveness of the sixth form and its future viability.