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Ms Rebecca Staples
Headteacher
Danum Academy
Armthorpe Road
Doncaster
DN2 5QD

Dear Ms Staples

Special measures monitoring inspection of Danum Academy

Following my visit with Lesley Butcher, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Suha Ahmad and John Greevy, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 27–28 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 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 September 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 considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to 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's Services for Doncaster Local Authority and as below.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead and team inspectors.

Annex

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

- Ensure that all teaching in Years 7 to 11 is at least good by making certain that all teaching staff:
 - have high expectations of students and set demanding work
 - take accurate account of students' prior knowledge and understanding when planning lessons
 - carry out frequent checks on how well students are learning in a lesson and make changes when students need more support or need to be stretched and challenged further
 - provide sufficient opportunities for students to take a lead in their own learning
 - set homework that is relevant and demanding and follows an overall plan that is shared with students and parents, especially in Key Stage 3.

- Raise achievement rapidly, so that all students make at least expected progress, particularly in mathematics, science, and Key Stage 3 English, by:
 - making sure staff in all subjects pay close attention to improving students' numeracy, oral communication, reading and writing, especially punctuation, spelling and grammar
 - ensuring staff quickly identify all students who are not making enough progress in their work, and target them for support in lessons
 - making more effective use of additional adult support in lessons.

- Reduce absence and the number of fixed-period exclusions to at least national rates by:
 - increasing students' awareness of the importance of good attendance for good achievement
 - finding effective ways to work in partnership with parents to improve their children's attendance, behaviour and achievement
 - analysing information on students' behaviour and attendance more rigorously to identify patterns in the barriers that students might face and work out ways to overcome them.

- Improve the effectiveness of senior and subject leaders in driving improvement by:
 - ensuring judgements on, and evaluation, of teaching are accurate
 - managing the performance of staff with greater rigour and holding them to account, rewarding effective teaching and supporting weaker teaching
 - making sure every student is set targets that are sufficiently challenging.

- Ensure that the governing body is fully effective in driving improvement by making certain that governors:
 - have accurate information on students' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - hold senior leaders rigorously to account for making rapid improvements to teaching and students' achievement
 - monitor the use of pupil premium funding and fully challenge leaders on how effectively funding is being used to ensure that these pupils make at least expected progress.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 27-28 January 2015.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised documents including those relating to the safe recruitment of staff. Inspectors met with members of the School Improvement Board (SIB) which is the academy's governing body. Meetings were also held with groups of students, and students were spoken to informally during breaks and lunchtimes. In addition inspectors met with teachers who have responsibility for subjects, teachers and teaching assistants.

The inspection team observed 46 parts of lessons, 20 of which were carried out jointly with members of the academy's senior leadership team. A short visit was made to the library to see the work with Year 10 boys to improve their creative writing, led by a published author. Inspectors also made a series of short visits to lessons on each site to look at student planners and the setting of homework.

Context

Four sixth form students, and one former student of the academy, were killed in a car crash in November 2014. The students were integral members of the academy community. Their deaths had a significant impact on the academy and the local community. As a result, the two communities pulled together to support the students, parents and staff. This work is ongoing, and will be for the foreseeable future. The monitoring visit scheduled for December 2014 did not take place and this is the first monitoring visit since May 2014.

Since the last monitoring visit in May 2014 there have been numerous changes to staffing. All staff who left have been replaced and the academy is fully staffed. Vocational subjects in horticulture and hair are now taught at the academy rather than by external providers.

The local authority hearing impaired unit moved to the academy site in September 2014.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In 2014 the proportion of students who achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE, including mathematics and English, was significantly below the national average. Results were also low given students' starting points. The proportion of students making expected progress in English fell. The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics rose and was close to the national average. Overall, however, students who left Year 11 in 2014 made inadequate progress.

Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers were narrower than in 2013. However, disadvantaged students still achieved a grade lower than their peers in both mathematics and English. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls increased. Overall girls' attainment is far higher than that of boys, and particularly so in English, mathematics and science. The academy's very detailed analysis of the 2014 results highlighted the strengths and improvements made in 2014. It also identified exactly where additional improvements were needed. The senior leadership team consequently looked in depth at how the academy could improve boys' achievement. This work was followed through with training for staff and is in the process of being embedded across the academy.

In some subjects at GCSE level in 2014, for example art and design, graphics, business and physical education, the proportion of students making expected progress exceeded expectations. The attainment of students in these subjects was higher than expected given their starting points.

The academy has much accurate data about the progress and attainment of students in Years 7 to 11. These data show that the gaps between the achievement of girls and boys in mathematics, English and science, appear in Year 7 and widen as the students go through the academy. At Key Stage 3, students are making less progress in English and science than in mathematics.

In a minority lessons, there is a greater focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills. For example mathematics lessons were seen starting with word games to develop the students' understanding of key words. In tutor time students are receiving numeracy and literacy sessions. However, these activities are not embedded across the academy. A published author is working with groups of boys in Year 10 to develop their creative writing skills. As part of these sessions the boys are covering literacy techniques which will directly support their writing in English.

The use of additional adults in lessons to support learning varies. Training has been provided, but, in too many lessons additional adults are used to support behaviour, or they sit with one student and do not support others, even if the student they are with understands the work and can get on with it on their own. Often additional adults are not aware of the lesson content before the lesson and this reduces their ability to effectively support learning. Some additional adults make a very positive contribution to the work of students. For example, in a science lesson an additional adult asked very challenging questions to all students and enabled the students to understand what they had to do and why they were doing it. In a Year 7 French lesson the additional adult was used very effectively as a judge when the students were working in teams. This meant the additional adult was an integral part of the learning taking place and was able to support the students to make good progress.

The quality of teaching

In too many lessons the expectations staff have of students are too low. In particular the low expectations of what boys can do means boys are making far less progress than girls. The academy has much accurate and up-to-date data about every individual student. This is being used well on an academy-wide basis to set challenging targets, keep parents informed about their children's progress, and highlight strengths and areas for development. These data are not being used effectively by all members of staff to plan lessons which are pitched at the right level for students. Consequently, in too many lessons some students, in particular the most able and boys, are not challenged enough and do not make sufficient progress.

In some lessons, teachers stick rigidly to their lesson plan regardless of whether the work is appropriate or challenging enough for students. They do not alter the work when it becomes apparent that students are finding it too easy or too hard. Consequently, some students sit with no work to do because they have finished. A few start to engage in low level off task behaviour, putting their heads on the desk or playing with pencils/pens. In a minority of lessons where progress is better, students are given ample opportunities to take a lead in their learning. In an Engineering lesson, for example, students had access to data about their achievement which showed them exactly what they had done well, what they needed to improve and the areas they had not covered. By using this information students were able to decide what they needed to do in the lesson and access the support they needed from the teacher.

The homework schedule is not adhered to and too often students do not receive the homework they should. The senior leadership team conducted a homework scrutiny in early January and plans are in place to improve the quality, and quantity, of homework. It is too early to judge the impact of these plans.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The proportion of students who persistently do not attend the academy is far too high. It has decreased slightly since the last monitoring visit but it is still nearly twice the national average.

More students are attending the academy on a day-to-day basis. The academy has put in place many strategies for encouraging students to attend more regularly. These strategies are more effective in Key Stage 3 where students are attending more frequently than in Key Stage 4. Links with parents are improving and starting to have some impact. However, the academy has had to take legal action against some parents whose children regularly do not attend.

One barrier to the attendance of some students was the lack of appropriate courses for them at Key Stage 4 on the academy site. To address this, the academy changed

the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to provide a horticulture course based at the lower site. Students on this course are now attending much more regularly.

The number of fixed term exclusions dropped considerably between May and November 2014. Between November and the end of term the number increased. Since the start of this term, while remaining above the national average, the number of fixed term exclusions has fallen again.

In lessons, when activities are motivating and engaging, students behave well. They are willing to learn and pay attention. When lessons do not motivate, often because the work is either too easy or too hard, some students misbehave. Students told the inspection team they engage in low level disruptive behaviour such as chatting and playing with pens when they finished the work or did not understand it.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The leadership of the senior team, and the headteacher in particular, after the accident was phenomenal. Students were supported extremely effectively, and provided with a safe and secure environment in which to grieve. The impact of the accident on the academy's, and local, community is ongoing, and students continue to be supported by staff and counsellors.

Senior leaders make accurate judgement about the progress students make in lessons. Senior leaders correctly identify what aspects of lessons are enabling the students to make good progress and which are hindering progress. Feedback to teachers about lessons is informative, highlighting strengths and areas for development, but also supportive in giving teachers the opportunity to reflect on students' progress. As a result, there is evidence that teachers are improving their practice. Middle leaders are being held to account through the more rigorous meeting system. Middle leaders are beginning to hold staff to account, for the progress made by students in lessons. However, in too many lessons students still do not make the progress they should.

Automatic pay rises for teachers at the end of each academic year have been stopped. Teachers' pay increases are now linked to the progress made by students. The targets set for teachers to achieve are realistic and appropriate. The School Improvement Board (SIB) is fully aware of the system, how it works, and its role in ensuring that it is effective in raising standards.

Students' targets are more aspirational. These targets, and the students' progress towards them, are tracked regularly. However, staff are not always using these targets to plan lessons and work in too many lessons is too easy. This means students are not given the opportunity to reach their targets.

The academy has put in place policies and structures to support the students to make better progress. However, these policies and structures are not embedded and their use is inconsistent. As a result, the progress made by different groups of students varies considerably. Some groups of students, for example girls, are making far better progress than others. While some disadvantaged students are making better progress, the gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers are widening in some year groups.

Members of the SIB have the experience of challenging and supporting schools and academies. The SIB meets regularly and holds the academy's leaders rigorously to account. The SIB is presented with accurate information about students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Of particular note is the good quality of the analysis of the GCSE results in 2014. The SIB accepts that the impact of pupil premium spending is not good enough, especially as gaps in some year groups are widening, and it is a priority for the academy. Hence, a pupil premium plan is now in place, but it is too early to judge its impact.

External support

Prior to November 2014, external consultants provided a range of support. Much of this support focused on finding out strengths and weakness to establish what the academy needed to do to ensure students made better progress. As a result of this, the SIB and senior leadership team know what needs to be done and how much progress they have made in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last Ofsted section 5 inspection. Since November 2014, the amount of work done by external consultants has decreased. Plans are in place to increase the support by external consultants to improve the quality of teaching. It is too early to judge the impact of these plans.