

Tribal  
Kings Orchard, One Queen  
Street, Bristol  
BS2 0HQ

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

Direct T 0117 311 5323  
Direct email: [suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com](mailto:suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com)



26 February 2015

Mr S Badat  
The Principal  
Gloucester Academy  
Painswick Road  
Gloucester  
GL4 6RN

Dear Mr Badat

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Gloucester Academy**

Following my visit with Joseph Skivington and Charlotte Evers, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 24 and 25 February 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 school'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 April 2014. 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 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 Interim Advisory Board, the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise achievement by improving teaching to good or better levels across the academy ensuring that:
  - teachers demand higher standards of work from their students during lessons and in the written tasks they set
  - students' work is accurately assessed and that new work planned enables them to make good or better progress
  - students' work is marked regularly with comments that help students to improve their work and increase the progress they make
  - the progress made by different groups of students is checked regularly against the quality of teaching they receive.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels on raising students' achievement, particularly that of the most able, by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders have the capacity to deliver improvement priorities
  - checking that the information on students' progress is accurate in all subjects and staff are clear about the capabilities of each student
  - checking that students who are eligible for the government's pupil premium funding receive high calibre support that meets their specific needs
  - promoting literacy skills in all subjects across the academy
  - ensuring that the governing body holds the senior leaders and managers to account for all aspects of the academy's performance.
- Improve behaviour and students' attitudes to learning by:
  - making sure all staff and students understand and adhere to the academy's procedures for managing behaviour
  - ensuring students are engaged productively in lessons and participate actively in their learning.

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

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 February 2015**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, Vice-Principal and three members of the governing body. Inspectors met with the Chief Executive Officer and two directors of the White Horse Federation. Discussions were held with academy leaders directly responsible for implementing the post-inspection action plan and curriculum development. Discussions were held with groups of students formally, and at other times, to ascertain their views on learning, behaviour and safety. Academy progress data were reviewed. The single central record was checked. Inspectors visited 22 part lessons with the Vice-Principal, and the assistant principal responsible for teachers' professional development. Inspectors visited intervention lessons with the assistant responsible for disadvantaged students and newly arrived students learning English. The inspectors reviewed students' work during lessons, and a selection of work from Year 7 students.

### **Context**

The assistant principal for English is also the interim leader of mathematics. There are vacancies for two mathematics teachers. On 1 March 2015 the White Horse Federation will assume sponsorship of the academy.

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

The academy is without a comprehensive record of each student's subject knowledge and skills as the students develop through Years 7 to 9. Consequently, the academy is unable to report reliably on the students' progress at this point in the year. This work is slow to develop due to the restructuring of subject teaching in Years 8 and 9.

The assessment of students' basic skills in Year 7 is developing well, although there has been no analysis undertaken against students' starting points. The progress of students who are on intervention programmes for reading, writing, grammar and numeracy is thoroughly checked. All these students are making good progress. Many have made significant gains in their knowledge and skills. The programmes are extremely well organised. The match of tasks to students' needs is accurate and ensures students are always progressing in the lessons.

Those students who are disabled and those with special educational needs are making good progress. Adults teach students the strategies they need to become effective learners and, in turn, students make the most of the small group and individual lessons.

Students are developing good resilience and confidence as learners as they are less prone to giving up or turning to disruptive behaviour as a way to avoid learning in lessons. Students are developing well as problem solvers and thinking creatively.

Lessons observations and book scrutiny show that students make the progress expected in most subjects. They are becoming confident speakers and write effectively. In all year groups, written work is better presented, with age appropriate punctuation, grammar and spelling. In Year 7, the challenges to think deeply, apply skills and extend ideas are consistently high in all lessons. Teachers do not always demand enough of more able students. Students respond well when expected to do more, as was the case in a Year 9 history lesson when the more able students worked with ideas and concepts at a level beyond that expected for their age.

Students' progress in mathematics is weaker than in other subjects, although the slide backwards has halted because lessons are more engaging and less prone to disruption. Teachers know what they should be teaching because they take account of what students know and do not know. The smaller classes help them support individuals and correct students' misunderstanding during the lesson. It is significant that less able students are keen to learn mathematics when taught by good teachers. For example, in a Year 11 revision class, less able students tried their hardest with number questions that were just that little bit more challenging.

Leaders have a good knowledge of what the barriers are to disadvantaged students achieving well. They use additional funds for disadvantaged pupils effectively to minimise many of these barriers. The emphases on improving language skills and developing self-esteem and confidence are proving particularly effective. However, the biggest barrier for many of these students is their poor attendance at the academy. Leaders have not yet fully addressed poor attendance of this group.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching is on a secure platform. There is greater consistency in teaching students how to become effective learners as a consequence of effective professional development. Teachers now manage their lessons confidently. They are relaxed with students, even those who are more demanding, and relationships in the classrooms are constructive.

The teachers provide good opportunities for discussion that allow students to explore ideas. Teachers are looking for students to develop in depth answers and they give students time to organise their thinking. This is evident in marking and feedback of students' work however not all teachers are asking the harder questions and expect students to respond quickly when this is appropriate. Sometimes when teachers mark students' work they merely state what has been learnt rather than show the students how it could be improved. In some examples, teachers did not go back to check that students had responded to the marking. This erodes the higher expectations that other teachers have of students' attitudes and standards of work.

Students remain positive about most of the teaching and continue to reflect that teaching is getting better. The work given to students is better matched to their needs. Students are clear what and why they are doing the tasks. Interventions and

small group lessons are highly effective. The staff taking these lessons are well supervised by the inclusion leader and receive appropriate training. New students who are at very early stages of acquiring English language are expertly tutored. The staff adjust their teaching to secure the best response from these students.

Teaching in Year 7 is effective. The lessons are engaging the students. The tasks require them to develop their creative, enquiry, and problem solving skills. The students have acquired a very positive attitude to learning. Teachers' expectations of learning are high, particularly in the demands for longer pieces of writing and research skills. The tasks require complex responses and all students are benefiting from this demanding environment.

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

The academy is calm and a safe place to be for all students. Disruptive behaviour is now rare. Students are learning how to manage their unacceptable behaviour and this is ensuring they get down to work quickly and purposefully. They behave sensibly in the shared spaces and when leaving and arriving at the academy. Students show respect to each other and value each other's differences.

No lessons during this monitoring visit were fully attended. Persistent absence is high and the overall attendance rate is not improving rapidly enough. Weaknesses in the knowledge and skills of some of the disadvantaged learners are slow to improve because they are not in school enough of the time. The attendance policy and procedures are not effective. Students themselves do not understand the rewards for good attendance. There is a paucity of guidance given to students on how they can tackle the issues that prevent them from attending well. The policy does not reflect the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care.

The number of students in alternative placements has reduced. Some of this is due to successful re-integration back into the academy, on to courses that meet the students' needs. Permanent exclusions have reduced to one for this academic year as a result of the success in helping students manage their behaviour.

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

The strong and determined leadership of the Principal continues to drive the academy forwards. Higher expectations are increasingly evident in the learning behaviours of students and the atmosphere in the academy. The impact of weekly professional development for adults has been instrumental in turning ambition into daily practice. The professional development programme is comprehensive. The sharing of best practice within the academy combines well with training from the local teaching school to address weaker aspects of teaching and learning.

The curriculum is undergoing further change, with a focus on better preparing students for the content of future examinations. The subject leaders are taking

responsibility for this. They are working well together to share the teaching of the skills that students require to achieve well. At this stage, a clear assessment strategy is lacking for subjects in Key Stage 3. The assessment leader is unclear about what and how progress is to be reported.

Vocational courses demand the same high expectations as other subjects. High quality resources are a factor in the success of students on level 2 courses. The location of the beauty salon in the entrance hall and serving foods from the catering department in the canteen send a clear message of the how these skills are valued by the academy.

Assistant principals are increasingly effective and instrumental in securing improvement in the academy. They take more responsibility for evaluating the impact of staff development and training on the quality of learning in their areas. Mathematics is led decisively. Improvements in lesson planning and a coherent action plan linked to training have stabilised teaching and learning. Students are now getting an improved mathematics education.

Additional support to help students close the gaps in their skills are very well organised. Staff are matched well to meet students' emotional needs to influence their behaviour. The interventions focus precisely on the students' language and numeracy needs.

Governors are enthusiastic and well focused on their responsibilities. A comprehensive programme of visits that include 'book looks', observations of lessons and discussions with students ensures they gain their own view of the progress the academy is making. They have a good grasp of where more focus is required and work strategically with the Principal to address this.

### **External support**

The White Horse Federation successfully negotiated with the previous sponsors to provide additional staff development and training. It has set up school-to-school support to further develop middle leaders' roles. This is very recent and has concentrated effectively on supporting the assistant principal to improve teaching and learning in mathematics.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- The academy should implement a system for reporting on student progress in subject skills and knowledge in Key Stage 3.
- Reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance by revising the attendance policy to ensure it is effective.