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27 February 2015

Mrs Christine Parker  
Headteacher  
Redcar Academy - A Community School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
Kirkleatham Lane  
Redcar  
North Yorkshire  
TS10 4AB

Dear Mrs Parker

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Redcar Academy - A Community School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Redcar and Cleveland**

Following my visit to your school on 26 February 2015 with Chris Smith HMI, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action:

- To ensure all teachers use assessment information well to make lessons challenging for all students and effectively check on rates of learning.
- Ensure all teachers consistently tackle poor attitudes to learning quickly and effectively and use appropriate rewards as well as sanctions.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the two senior leaders with responsibility for behaviour and safety, a group of subject leaders, two groups of students and four directors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Most of the visit was spent jointly observing lessons with academy

leaders. A range of documentation was reviewed including academy monitoring of teaching and behavioural incident logs.

## **Context**

Four English teachers have left the academy including the Director and assistant Director of English. There are four new teachers in English including a Director and Assistant Director of English. Following other staff departures there is a new Head of RE and two teachers of Design Technology are jointly leading the department.

## **Main findings**

Actions taken by leaders and managers in the academy have not been successful in improving the achievement of students. 2014 saw the achievement of students in Year 11 decline further. The progress of students in English and mathematics remained well below national averages and the gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers grew wider. The academy is now below the floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Leaders and managers were surprised by these outcomes. This has led to a considerable amount of activity to try and improve the accuracy of their monitoring and student outcomes. There is now a sharper focus on improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback. In the lessons inspectors visited there are signs that this approach is starting to become a consistent feature of teachers' practice. However, there are still too many instances where some teachers accept poor presentation, allow spellings to go uncorrected and students not responding to improve their work following feedback.

Academy leaders have provided training for teachers on how to best use assessment information to deliver lessons which are challenging for all students. For some teachers this has had a significant impact. In science, for example, teachers showed a clear understanding of how to use this assessment information to deliver challenging and engaging lessons which are helping students improve their progress. The impact of this work still remains patchy. Some teachers are still delivering lessons which lack challenge and perpetuate weak attitudes to learning. Too often students slump on their desks bored or rock back on their chairs when they should be listening or working. Some students also speak to teachers in a disrespectful manner. Not enough teachers check carefully on whether students understand what is being taught. A lack of regular high quality homework is also preventing students making faster progress.

Actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence have not had sufficient impact. The latest academy data shows that attendance remains stubbornly below average and is particularly poor for disadvantaged students and those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Directors recognise that the actions taken thus far have not had enough impact on student achievement. Directors are not clear on what is preventing faster progress. Directors now have a curriculum and achievement committee to monitor the work of the academy. It is too early to evaluate its impact.

### **External support**

The academy has been working with Challenge Partners and Sacred Heart School. This valuable support has been centred on checking whether teachers are accurately assessing student achievement. This external support has identified strengths in teachers' practice and made sensible and clear recommendations for where further improvement is needed to ensure accurate information on student achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Redcar and Cleveland and as below.

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

### **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 the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]