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13 March 2015

Alison Mobbs
Headteacher
Lynn Grove Academy
Lynn Grove
Gorleston
Great Yarmouth
NR31 8AP

Dear Mrs Mobbs

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Lynn Grove High School

Following my visit to your academy on 11–12 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions taken since the academy's previous monitoring visit.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in December 2013. 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 the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education at Creative Education Academies Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority

Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to at least good by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make thorough and consistent use of information about students' attainment and progress to plan and provide lesson activities that are suitably challenging for all ability groups
 - making the best use of available learning time in lessons for productive work
 - give students more opportunity to think harder and discuss their work in lessons.
- Raise students' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers mark students' work regularly, with clear advice on how to improve it, and make sure students act on this advice
 - all staff share learning targets with the students.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - information about students' progress is used consistently, quickly and effectively by all leaders and teachers to support any students who are starting to fall behind in their work
 - the impact of activities funded by the pupil premium is monitored and reviewed with greater rigour by all leaders in order to close the gap in the achievement of eligible students
 - subject leaders have the skills they need to be confident in holding their teams to account.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 11–12 March 2015

Evidence

Meetings were held with the principal, two vice principals, one assistant principal, five subject leaders, three progress leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, two groups of students, and the Director of Education at Creative Education Academies Trust. Her Majesty's Inspector observed 14 part-lessons jointly with senior leaders in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education, design and technology, and art and design. The academy's most recent information on students' attainment and progress was analysed. A sample of students' current work, plans for improvement and monitoring records of teaching were scrutinised. Safeguarding documents were checked.

Context

Four new staff have joined the academy since the previous monitoring visit and three have left. The academy became a sponsored academy on 1 March 2015 as part of the Creative Education Academies Trust. The governing body has reduced in size following the formation of a local governing body.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors are using assessment data more precisely to analyse students' progress. As a consequence, additional support is more focused on particular groups of students, particularly those in Year 11 who are not reaching their targets quickly enough. A wide range of additional support is now provided for students, including additional classes after school and at weekends. However, teachers still miss opportunities to plug gaps in students' skills and knowledge in lessons. This is because they generally do not use information gathered through tests and other activities analytically enough to adapt their teaching. In subjects such as physical education, teaching is immediately adjusted in response to the skills and knowledge that individual students show, and deliberate links to previous learning reinforce students' understanding of how to make progress.

Teachers' feedback and marking contribute to the improvements students make to their work. There is more evidence of students responding to teachers' marking. In an English lesson, the teacher reinforced the expectations of students by insisting that they made notes of verbal feedback and acted upon them. Students also cited the problems they are expected to solve in mathematics and additional research they are expected to pursue in history as examples of feedback and marking that help them make better progress, including that of the most able. The most effective examples balance the time spent marking with the time expected of students in making their response. However, although students' books show examples of the

marking policy improving subsequent work, this does not happen frequently enough to have a lasting impact.

Training and coaching led by staff with particular skills is helping to improve the quality of teaching. For example, a recent training day focused on meeting different pupils' needs and involved leaders responsible for special educational needs, literacy, behaviour, data management and classroom organisation. It was followed by time allowed for middle leaders to plan departmental improvement with their teams. Nevertheless, although the academy's monitoring indicates that good or better teaching is the norm, the weaker teaching that remains is proving stubborn to improve. This indicates that the considerable investment in training and feedback to staff is not always leading to sustained improvement in the classroom or effective monitoring by middle leaders. As a consequence, inconsistencies remain within departments. The progress leaders are starting to challenge inconsistencies in students' achievement between subjects.

Parents and carers are being given more opportunities to support their children's learning. For example, a mock examinations and results day for Year 11 students has been followed up with an activity day focused on study skills and a parents' information evening. The comments made by parents and carers show a high level of satisfaction in this initiative, strong commitment to the academy and a thirst for greater and earlier involvement in the future.

The Year 9 consultations with individual students and their parents and carers, intended to ensure that students are well informed about courses and careers, show that senior leaders are using parents' feedback to make improvements. The views of students are similarly gaining influence through the higher profile of the school council and work of student leaders who are supporting their peers to do well. Assemblies and form times with a well-coordinated programme of themes are helping to increase the value students place on their education. While positive attitudes are reflected in far fewer exclusions and high levels of cooperation in the classroom, students' attendance and their pride in school work are not always good.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Standards are rising. A higher proportion of students are on track to attain five or more A* to C GCSE grades including both English and mathematics.
- Progress data are more reliable because the accuracy of the assessments of students' work is checked by external subject specialists.
- Middle leaders' confidence is growing. Their analysis of students' progress in subjects or year groups is more precise, following support by senior leaders.
- An increasing proportion of teachers contribute to staff training designed to improve the quality of teaching. Themes appropriately address inconsistencies.
- Staff give greater attention in class to working with individuals requiring additional support or challenge. The most able students support their peers well.

- A high proportion of students support after-school opportunities to catch up. Parents and carers are supportive of such efforts to raise standards.
- Records of governors' visits and meetings, for example those focused on English and the pupil premium, show a suitably high level of challenge.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- While students are attentive, whole-class teaching does not inspire them often enough. This holds back the pace of learning, particularly early on in lessons.
- Staff do not apply the academy's policies, including those on feedback and marking, consistently or regularly enough to speed up improvements concerted.
- Although staff assess students' progress and their contribution to learning more regularly and reliably, not all use this information to adapt their teaching.
- Assembly and form time initiatives designed to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not reinforced enough in lessons.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching is not persistent enough to ensure that improvements become embedded. Staff self-evaluation is underdeveloped.
- Students' books indicate that the pride they take in their work is inconsistent. Their efforts to improve presentation and accuracy vary between subjects and over time.
- Opportunities for students to catch up, although increasing, are not as widespread in the younger year groups as they are in Year 11.

External support

The academy sponsor, Creative Education Academies Trust, provides a high level of support for senior and middle leaders. Because support started early, the impact is already evident in the greater accuracy of teachers' assessment and academy's self-evaluation. Trust consultants with a proven track record of success in particular subjects are helping to strengthen middle leadership and management. In addition, the academy is building closer links with other educational settings, both locally and nationally, in order to widen the experience of staff and students and enrich the curriculum.