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12 March 2015

Ms Ann-Marie Latham
Headteacher
The Academy, Selsey
School Lane
Chichester
PO20 9EH

Dear Ms Latham

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Academy, Selsey

Following my visit to your academy on 12 March 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 me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your academy.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

I considered evidence including:

- observations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of students' behaviour throughout the day, including discussions with pupils
- documentary evidence including behaviour logs, records of exclusions, and the academy behaviour policy
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

The Academy, Selsey is an 11 to 16 academy. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, with 453 students on roll. The academy is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT). Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is just below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above the national average. The number of students with statements of special educational needs is much smaller than the national average. Since the last section 5 inspection in July 2014, there have been considerable changes in staffing. Ten new staff started in September 2014. Academy leaders report that there are significant difficulties in recruiting staff.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour requires improvement. However, there has been significant progress since the section 5 inspection in July. Senior leaders now lead by example and provide clear direction for staff. You re-launched a drive on raising standards of behaviour in September 2014. The academy's values of 'pride and excellence' are clearly visible around the site.

Academy leaders are able to provide a wealth of data to show that students' behaviour has improved. Expectations have been raised and as a result, the number of fixed term exclusions, internal exclusions in 'isolation' and removals from lessons has declined. Students and staff report that instances of low-level disruptive behaviour have also reduced because there is better teaching and more consistent implementation of the behaviour policy. However, academy leaders have not done enough to analyse and interpret the information they are collecting about behaviour. As a result, it is difficult for them to pinpoint where remaining weaknesses are or what additional strategies could be used to prevent disruption and support students even more effectively.

Students are friendly and welcoming. They are loyal to the academy, are happy with each other and feel safe and secure. They conduct themselves around the academy site in a civilised and orderly manner between lessons and at break and lunch times. Kitchen staff report that students are unfailingly polite and respectful when queuing and choosing snacks and lunches and that litter is minimal. Beginnings and endings to the day are calm and controlled. Students are well-supervised when catching buses or leaving the site. Your policy of 'meeting and greeting' students helps to set the tone for the day and enables staff to check on students' uniform. Because staff are there to check and greet students warmly, good working relationships are being maintained and students take more responsibility for their own uniform and punctuality.

Students generally speak courteously to staff, although on occasion a few students push the boundaries with responses that verge on the argumentative. Students told me that homophobic or racist language is rare. When it occurs it is dealt with well. There is occasional swearing around the site when students forget themselves, but

aggressive bad language is seldom heard. Students were fairly confident that most staff would tackle poor language, although this still depends on which teacher overhears it. Students are confident that bullying is taken extremely seriously and is managed well by all staff.

Expectations of students' behaviour in tutor time are not consistently high. In some of the tutorial sessions observed, it was clear that students were not in the habit of reading, even though this is timetabled. Some 'went through the motions' of reading, but were clearly not committed and others continued their chats and ignored staff's instructions to read silently. In one session observed during the inspection, time was used productively. Students read silently and with interest and concentration, alongside the teacher, who was also reading silently. In this way, positive attitudes were modelled and an interest in books and reading promoted. Students approach assemblies respectfully. During the inspection, they were seen to listen attentively and take notice of the key messages. Some older students also told me about assemblies which had a definite impact when they focused on promoting good learning behaviour and not just the consequences of poor behaviour. Students tried harder to show more positive and receptive attitudes to learning in lessons following such an assembly.

Academy leaders are rightly focusing on improving the quality of teaching, believing that if teaching is better, behaviour will improve. Students spoken to during the inspection agree and appreciate that they now have better teachers. Students told me that behaviour had improved since your appointment. Students said that at first they resisted the 'clampdown' on rules and uniform. However, they have settled down now and have accepted the changes. Students welcome a firmer stance on behaviour and pride in appearance and presentation because this is in their best interests.

I spoke to students whose behaviour had greatly improved under the current leadership. Staff combined firm but fair sanctions with care and understanding of their individual circumstances, which led to improved behaviour and a renewed focus on learning. Students said staff refuse to 'give up on them' which they genuinely appreciate.

Academy leaders rightly identify that some students lack confidence in their own ability, which sometimes comes across as diffident or non-committal answers to questions. Students understand that they make choices about how to behave and that misbehaviour shows a lack of respect to other students and staff. Improvements to behaviour are most clearly seen in Years 7, 8 and 9. The majority of Year 11 students are approaching their studies more seriously and are making more effort to work hard and concentrate.

However, improvements to behaviour are not seen consistently across the academy. Low-level disruption occurs because not all teachers insist on high enough standards and old habits still linger. For example, during the inspection visit a few students called out or made uninvited comments which disturbed the flow of the lesson. Some students do not arrive promptly at lessons and there are still a very few students who do not arrive with the right equipment to be ready to learn. Some older students need reminders about drawing diagrams in pencil and keeping their work neat and headed up accurately so that they can easily revise. In these cases, students do not deliberately set out to disrupt learning, but their poor habits contribute to an overly casual approach and lack of self-discipline.

In some lessons observed, teachers reminded students of expectations, but not sufficiently firmly, so students did not take the reminders seriously. It was also not always made clear what the expectations were, so students did not have a model of good learning behaviour to follow, nor were students praised when they paid attention, listened and worked hard. Academy leaders have not done enough to support students with knowing what good learning behaviour might look like. In short, students are clear about what they should *not* do, but are less clear about what they *should* do to prove that their behaviour is good.

Some examples of good behaviour were seen in Years 7 and 8. For example, in a Year 8 French lesson, students were praised for their strong contributions and answers, which helped to promote their good behaviour. The teacher reminded students to refer to their previous work in books. It was therefore easy for students to see the point of keeping their work neat and orderly. In other lessons, teachers' expectations of students were so high that they were able to work with sustained concentration on an African drumming assignment in the music practice rooms with minimal intervention from the teacher.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all teachers insist upon high standards of behaviour and carry out the behaviour policy consistently.
- Provide students with clear guidance about what good learning behaviour looks like.
- When collecting data about students' behaviour, analyse this more closely in order to identify any patterns and prevent poor habits recurring.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector