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Maria Nightingale  
The Nuneaton Academy  
Radnor Drive  
Nuneaton  
CV10 7PD

Dear Mrs Nightingale

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Nuneaton Academy**

Following my visit with Glen Goddard and William Cassell, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 24–25 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 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 March 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 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 NQTs, without first consulting me.

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 Warwickshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

- cc. Chair of the Governing Body
- cc. Local authority
- cc. The Secretary of State
- cc. The Education Funding Agency (EFA)

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, and so raise achievement, especially in mathematics and science, by ensuring that:
  - students are given activities which interest and challenge them
  - teachers have high expectations of students and ensure that they take pride in their work and complete all tasks set, including homework
  - the marking of students' work gives them clear guidance on how to improve, in accordance with the academy's marking policy
  - teachers use data on students' current progress to ensure that the work they set is always hard enough to move their learning forward.
  
- Improve the behaviour of students by:
  - ensuring that less learning is disrupted by off-task behaviour in lessons and the amount of time spent by senior staff responding to incidents is reduced
  - improving the attendance of students in those groups where it is below the national average.
  
- Improve leadership and management, including governance by:
  - ensuring that new leaders and teachers clearly understand their roles and responsibilities through an effective induction programme
  - ensuring that all leaders receive training to become more effective in monitoring the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that policies and procedures are more consistently applied across the academy
  - monitoring more closely the impact of the pupil premium funding on improving the achievement of eligible pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should also be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on insert date of inspection**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with you and other senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the multi academy trust.

### **Context**

Since my last visit there has been significant turnover of staff, including at senior level, which has affected leaders' capacity make the rapid improvements required. A Vice Principal for curriculum and teaching and learning and a Deputy Principal for attendance, behaviour and safeguarding have left the academy. There are interim arrangements in place for the strategic leadership of mathematics and for English.

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

The achievement of students at the academy is beginning to improve, particularly in English. Although rates of progress in mathematics remain well below those seen nationally, there has been improvement over this academic year. Consequently, you and your leaders are expecting that the percentage of students achieving 5 A\* to C grades including English and mathematics, will increase in 2015 to be above the government's floor standards. Nevertheless, it remains the case that too few students achieve well in mathematics, particularly girls and disadvantaged students.

The system for monitoring students' progress introduced in September is now embedded and this is being used effectively by senior leaders to identify underperformance and to hold middle leaders to account for progress in their areas of responsibility. You have a very clear picture of where additional action is required to further improve achievement.

Disabled students and those who have a special educational need are beginning to make better progress in English. Additional help provided for these students is now being reviewed to measure impact, informing further support as required. There is an increasing focus on ensuring that subject teachers take their needs specifically into account when planning lessons, although this is at an early stage. However, addressing the poor progress these students make in mathematics remains a priority.

### **The quality of teaching**

The high number of lessons covered by supply staff as a result of teaching vacancies is restricting the rate of improvement in teaching. Although you have secured a number of permanent appointments for the summer term to address this, vacancies

and staff absences mean that a significant minority of teachers in the school are on daily supply contracts. You have recognised the impact this is having on the quality of teaching overall and new arrangements have been put in place to ensure that these staff are better integrated and supported by curriculum leaders. Nonetheless, students report that their learning is often disrupted in these lessons by poor behaviour.

Inspectors noted that the quality of teaching amongst permanent staff is improving in most cases. This is because training and support are carefully targeted and those who do not improve are challenged rigorously by leaders. Although a small proportion of inadequate teaching remains, inspectors also saw good teaching, particularly in English, geography, history, art and PE. In these lessons, work was well-matched to students' abilities and the well-planned activities and strategies ensured that they remained interested and engaged by their learning, and students' books showed that this was routinely the case.

Where students' progress is not good, teachers are not using assessment well enough and often planning the same activity for all students regardless of their ability. Consequently, the most-able students are not being challenged appropriately and the least-able students sometimes struggle. We agreed that teachers need to make better use of the academy's detailed information about students' progress to ensure that planning for learning takes full account of different starting points.

Nearly all teachers are marking regularly and the vast majority are following the academy's policy of explaining 'next steps' for students to take. However the quality of advice given is still variable and there is little evidence that students' literacy is being addressed across all subjects. The introduction of teacher/pupil dialogue sheets is having a positive impact where these are used well; inspectors noted that there was an increase in the quality of students' responses and their understanding of how to improve in these instances.

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

Although the improvement of behaviour noted at the last visit has been maintained, little further improvement has been secured. Students are very clear that this is because of the high number of temporary teachers. They say that in subjects where there is a lot of such staff, behaviour is often poor and they find it difficult to learn. All year groups cited mathematics as an example where this occurs regularly, and Year 8 and 9 students cited some humanities subjects and languages. You agree with their assessment and have recently made the arrangements noted above to ensure that these staff have a better support system and are well-informed of the academy's behaviour policy.

Nevertheless, in those subjects where teaching is routinely good, students acknowledge that behaviour is also good and inspectors saw examples of excellent

attitudes to learning, where students demonstrated a keen desire to extend their own learning, which was well supported by their teachers.

Behaviour around the academy is variable. Generally, students move around the buildings sensibly but on occasion boisterous behaviour can lead to silly pushing and shoving. Too many students are late to lessons.

You have significantly reduced the number of fixed term exclusions and this is now below the national average for 2014. However, attendance remains an urgent priority. Too many students are absent too often. The introduction of improved, more rigorous systems to tackle this has stalled, following the departure of the Deputy Principal who was leading this work. The responsibility has now been reallocated to the Senior Vice Principal, and plans discussed with inspectors include appropriate actions and targets to address the issue.

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

At my last visit, you had restructured the senior and middle leadership team to increase capacity. Initially, this was successful. However, the unexpected departure of key members of the senior team has had a significant impact, slowing the planned improvements, particularly of behaviour and attendance. This is despite you and the academy trust doing your utmost to manage the situation. Plans for a re-organisation of responsibilities from April are well-thought out and you expect that these will bring you back on track. This will mean that, alongside the appointment of teachers to existing vacancies, you will be able to re-focus on achieving more rapid improvement in attendance and of the quality of teaching.

Middle leaders are now involved appropriately in monitoring the quality of teaching and most are able to describe how they are holding their staff accountable for students' progress. We agreed that the next step should focus on ensuring that subject teachers fully understand their role in the process as active participants.

The improvements in sixth form leadership noted at my last visit are beginning to have an impact. Teachers and students now have higher expectations of what they can achieve. Last year, all sixth form students went on to education, training or employment, suggesting that they are studying courses that increasingly meet their needs and interests. For instance, additional vocational courses are being introduced.

The change to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to meet the new Progress 8 measures was implemented in November 2014 by the Principal and the Senior Vice Principal. Consequently, the academy is still in a transitional stage in the preparation for the new Progress 8 measures. However, at Key Stage 3, a pilot literacy programme has been introduced to address the low levels of literacy on entry of many students.

Although it is early days, there are signs of accelerated progress for students in Year 7 as a result.

Governors have worked hard to support and challenge the academy. They are very clear about its strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in strategic planning for addressing priorities. Minutes show that appropriate questions are being asked and follow up actions taken where appropriate. We discussed and agreed that it would be useful to ensure that all plans include progress measures at timed intervals which would be set against actions and intended outcomes. This will enable governors to quickly identify and challenge where progress is not rapid enough.

### **External support**

The multi academy trust has maintained close contact with the academy, providing strategic support and challenge appropriately. Following the unexpected departure of staff described above, it has been instrumental in sourcing support from within the trust but also further afield. This has included secondments from trust academies to the leadership team and brokering of support from a local teaching school alliance and from consultants.