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22 April 2015

Karen Lockett
Headteacher
Alleyne's Academy
Oulton Road
Stone
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Dear Ms Lockett

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Alleyne's Academy

Following my visit with Mark Sims, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 21 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The inspection also focused on relevant aspects of the quality of leadership and management (including governance) at the academy.

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspectors met the headteacher, senior leaders and other staff, groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the achievement of disadvantaged students, governors' minutes and attendance and behaviour records. They also examined the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans and made brief visits to a small number of lessons.

Context

Alleyne's High School converted to an academy, Alleyne's Academy, in September 2013. The academy takes students from Year 9, primarily from two middle schools. Only a small proportion, around 14%, of students at the academy are known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of the students are of White British heritage and only 1% of students have a first language that is not English. There are fewer than 10 students in the care of the local authority.

Achievement

In 2014, a cohort of 35 disadvantaged students made considerably less progress than their peers at the academy. In English 37% of disadvantaged students achieved the expected levels of progress compared to 78% of other students. In mathematics 46% of disadvantaged students achieved expected progress compared to 81% of other students. As a result of their poor progress, only 31% of disadvantaged students reached the key benchmark of five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades compared to 75% of their peers.

In the previous three years (2011-2013) the predecessor school had been making good progress in closing the performance gap between disadvantaged students and others but the gap widened considerably in 2014. For current students, the academy has secure tracking information that indicates disadvantaged students are making better progress that is much closer to others in the academy.

Leaders have struggled to explain the poor performance of disadvantaged students in 2014. Regular academy tracking information had identified that these students were not doing well and although interventions and support were put in place they were not effective in improving outcomes.

Leadership and management

Information is not used systematically by senior or middle leaders to put in place well-targeted activities to address the needs under-performing groups, in particular disadvantaged students. The academy has effective systems to track the progress of all students but tends to make use of this information to identify individual students who need additional support to catch up with their work, rather than looking for, and acting on, broader trends or patterns. Likewise, despite a range of activities funded through the pupil premium that tackle underachievement and disengagement, these are not monitored closely enough to identify whether disadvantaged students benefit. The academy's self-evaluation covers most relevant aspects of the work of the academy but makes very little mention of disadvantaged students. The academy improvement plan has very few suggested actions and no measurable targets to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged students.

External support

The academy has had effective support from Staffordshire local authority in supporting children in the care of the local authority. The academy has not received any other external support for its work with students eligible for free school meals although there is support from the Staffordshire 'families first' team for all students who have very poor attendance.

The strengths in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are:

- Staff at the academy are proud of a culture which recognises every student as an individual, focusing carefully on individual needs and providing support as necessary. Leaders were able to provide examples of how individual disadvantaged students have received carefully targeted support.
- The academy has developed effective systems to track the progress of all students, including disadvantaged students. Reliable achievement information is collected every half term and an analysis of the performance of different groups of students is produced.
- The academy has adapted the curriculum to better meet the needs of the disadvantaged and others. An increased proportion of time is spent on English and mathematics, a construction course has been developed on site and there are increased opportunities to study vocational courses in the sixth form.
- Current disadvantaged students are making better progress than similar students in 2014.
- The funding provided through the pupil premium for students in the care of the local authority is used well to thoughtfully address their needs. The Staffordshire virtual school headteacher ensures that the academy produces a plan for each child, and the evidence from achievement and attendance records suggests that these students are doing well at the academy.
- The academy uses pupil premium funding to support a range of initiatives including additional tuition in mathematics and English, extra intervention to improve attendance and payment for educational visits.

The weaknesses in the academy's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are:

- Leaders have not used available tracking information well to prioritise actions that will best support disadvantaged students.
- Leaders do not monitor activities funded through the pupil premium carefully enough. As a result, they do not have a clear idea of how many disadvantaged students take up opportunities and whether the activity has led to any improvement in these students' academic and wider achievement. This lack of strategic monitoring limits the academy's ability to measure the impact of pupil premium spending and plan appropriate and effective actions for future cohorts.
- Leaders have not ensured that required information about how well the pupil premium funding is spent has been shared with parents on the academy's

website. There is little information about the activities that have taken place in 2014-2015 and limited evidence that of the impact of spending.

- Although there has been improvement in the progress and attainment of current disadvantaged students there is still a considerable gap between their achievement and that of others in the academy.
- Disadvantaged students are not carefully tracked through the transition from middle schools, limiting the academy's ability to intervene early or continue effective actions begun at middle school.
- There are a wide range of measures for which the academy does not analyse information about disadvantaged pupils. For example, destinations when students leave the academy, contact with parents, internal behaviour sanctions and attendance at extra-curricular activities. This limits leaders' understanding of how well disadvantaged students are participating in the life of the academy.
- Disadvantaged students have lower levels of attendance than others in the academy and are much more likely to be absent for significant periods of time. Actions funded through the pupil premium have led to some reduction in this rate but it is still too high for disadvantaged students.
- Disadvantaged students were far more likely to receive a fixed term exclusion in 2014. This situation has improved considerably in this academic year with fewer exclusions across all students in the academy and a reduced proportion of exclusions of disadvantaged students.
- Governors understand how well disadvantaged students achieve academically but are unaware of the proportion of disadvantaged students that have poor attendance or have been excluded from the academy. They know how pupil premium funding is spent but they do not have information about the impact of the pupil premium funding.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all activities funded through the pupil premium are thoroughly evaluated to ensure the academy is aware of how many disadvantaged students participate in the activities and whether they lead to improved outcomes for these students.
- Provide governors with regular evaluative information about the spending of the pupil premium so that they are better able to challenge the actions of leaders.
- Ensure that senior leaders are clear about who is responsible for overseeing the priorities for spending the pupil premium and accountable for improved outcomes for disadvantaged students.

- Continue to develop strategies to improve the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged students so the gaps between them and other students continue to get smaller.
- Improve the arrangements for transition from middle schools so that disadvantaged students receive high quality support and intervention where necessary.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and as below. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James

Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority
cc. The Education Funding Agency (EFA)
cc. Regional Schools Commissioner