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27 April 2015

Mr Matthew Partington
Principal
Goole Academy
Centenary Road
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Dear Mr Partington

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Goole Academy

Following my visit to your academy with Christine Kennedy and Georgiana Sale, Additional Inspectors, and Suzanne Lithgow, Her Majesty's Inspector, on 23 - 24 April 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 visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures

I am also of the opinion that the academy may continue to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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, Family and Schools for the East Riding of Yorkshire and the Education Funding Agency. This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects from Years 7 to 13 so that it is consistently good or better and accelerates the rate of progress of all groups of students, by ensuring that:
 - information about the levels at which students work is used carefully to plan activities that challenge them accurately, interest them and enable them to reach their potential
 - teaching builds up students' knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they broaden their learning and can apply what they know
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and quantity of students' work, including very regular opportunities to write at length, and in presentation, spelling and grammatical accuracy
 - development of students' literacy and numeracy are consistently incorporated into all learning, based on a whole-school policy that all staff follow.

- Improve students' behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance throughout the academy, including that of sixth-form students, by making sure that:
 - all staff have high expectations of students' behaviour and attitudes to learning, supported by consistent use of the behaviour policy
 - all students understand the link between attendance and progress and the importance prospective employers give to good attendance
 - all students have individual attendance targets, which are constantly reviewed, with a minimum target of 95%
 - all staff fully understand the link between the quality of teaching and students' attitudes to learning and ensure that teaching engages students and motivates them.

- Urgently strengthen the impact of leadership and management across the academy in supporting good achievement, by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels have full accountability for the impact of their individual responsibilities on the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour, and check their impact regularly and rigorously
 - careers information, education and guidance is planned carefully across the academy to enable students to develop the necessary knowledge to make informed choices about their future, and skills in preparing for the world of work, including work experience
 - the governing body has a full and accurate understanding of the performance of the academy so that it is able to hold leaders fully to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken, to include a specific focus on the impact of pupil premium spending, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved. Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the academy.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 23-24 April 2015

Evidence

Inspectors met with you, other academy leaders and the sponsor chief executive, Alan Yellup, OBE. Inspectors also met governors, including the Chair, Andrew Percy MP. Documents, such as reviews of progress against areas for improvement, up-to-date student progress data and the quality of teaching, were evaluated. Inspectors visited 21 lessons, spoke with students and teachers about their work, examined the work in students' books and observed students' behaviour in and out of lessons.

Context

Since the third monitoring inspection, a new governing body has been instituted. The academy has appointed four mathematics teachers who will take up their posts in September 2015 and four 'Teach First' graduates for English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. The academy retains a number of unqualified teachers.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The latest progress data indicate continued improvement in the attainment and progress of Key Stage 4 students. The deficit between disadvantaged students' performance and other students in the academy is closing. Key Stage 5 students' progress in A Level subjects is also improving but there is more work to do to ensure that all students make at least expected progress. At Key Stage 3, the news is less encouraging. In almost every subject more than half of the students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not on track to reach at least expected progress levels relative to their starting points. The accuracy of this data was corroborated during inspectors' observations of learning and their scrutiny of students' work during the inspection.

The quality of teaching

Inspectors' scrutiny of wide-ranging evidence indicates that overall, the impact of teaching on students' learning is improving. However, inspectors are concerned by the 'rump' of less effective and inadequate teaching in the academy. Frankly, this practice has no chance of regaining the lost ground in students' knowledge, skills and understanding caused by their underachievement over time. Inspectors saw some high-quality, challenging teaching, which led to accelerated learning. This was counterbalanced by uninspiring, unfocused teaching which resulted in little learning. Staff identified as delivering less effective teaching have been put on coaching and support plans to improve the impact of their work. Quality marking and feedback are more evident but they are not securely embedded across the academy. Strategies to provide a Key Stage 3 curriculum that is 'fit for purpose' have been introduced but have not had sufficient time to show major impact thus far. Nevertheless, students are now receiving a better quality of provision overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The strategies in place to raise levels of attendance and punctuality in the academy are proving effective with significant improvements now evident. Students' behaviour at social times was mostly commendable, reflecting an improved atmosphere and ethos in the academy. In the most effective learning seen in lessons, students' behaviour was impeccable and focused on actively engaging in learning. Regrettably, the opposite was true in lessons where the least effective learning took place. Nevertheless, fixed-term exclusions, referrals to the internal exclusion base and the numbers of repeat offenders are all falling. Inspectors highlighted a number of potential safety issues. Some of these were misconceptions; others were resolved quickly; while others need a coordinated response to ensure a consistent approach and recognition of the dangers present.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The academy's leaders have successfully gained the trust and confidence of staff, who report a much-improved morale and clarity of purpose. The raft of strategic actions undertaken to 'kick start' the academy's recovery are having an impact, which is reflected in the improvements reported in the quality of provision and outcomes for students. There is a greater coherence to leadership arrangements with clearer lines of accountability and more regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of progress in place. Some important foundations have been laid. The challenge for the academy's leaders going forward is to consolidate and build on these successes, while extending their sphere of influence to every 'nook and cranny' in the academy to ensure the required consistency and quality are embedded in every single classroom and present within every member of staff.

The careers information and guidance curriculum has been modified to ensure students all receive work experience, to prepare them better for the world of work.

Members of the governing body have relevant skills from education, business and school improvement, which they will use to challenge and support the academy's journey out of special measures. They are taking suitable steps to gain an objective view of the academy's performance, so they can hold leaders to account accordingly.

In the time until the next monitoring inspection, the academy has the opportunity to deliver the predicted exam results and eliminate the remaining weaker aspects of provision and outcomes. If successful, it will be well placed to offer inspectors compelling evidence that it is no longer causes concern or requires special measures.

A statement from the academy on the nature and extent of the academy's sixth form provision going forward is imminent.

External support

The intervention of the sponsor, Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT), into every facet of the academy's work is ongoing and remains necessary. More recently, the nature and extent of WCAT's involvement has reduced which it asserts, reflects a greater confidence in the academy's discrete leadership, to drive improvement itself.