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3 June 2015

Martin Kerridge
Headteacher
Madeley High School
Newcastle Road
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Crewe
CW3 9JJ

Dear Mr Kerridge

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Madeley High School

Following my visit with Deborah James, Her Majesty's Inspector to your academy on 2 June 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 school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and made brief visits to a small number of lessons.

Context

Madeley High School converted to an academy in July 2013. It is a smaller than average secondary school with 628 students on roll. Only a small proportion, around 12.5%, of students at the academy is known to eligible for free school meals. The majority of students are of White British heritage and only 3% of students have a first language that is not English. There are fewer than 10 students in the care of

the local authority. Governors and leaders are currently holding discussions about setting up a multi-academy trust with two local primary schools.

Achievement

In 2014, a cohort of 21 disadvantaged students made considerably less progress than their peers at the academy. In English, 38% of disadvantaged students made the expected levels of progress compared to 63% of other students. In mathematics, 52% of disadvantaged students achieved expected progress compared with 87% of other students. Because of their poor progress, only 19% of disadvantaged students reached the key benchmark of five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades compared to 63% of their peers.

Over the past three years (2012 – 2014), the achievement of disadvantaged students has declined and performance gaps between them and other students, both in academy and nationally, have grown considerably. This is particularly evident in English where, for example, the proportion of disadvantaged students in the academy making expected progress was 37% below the figure for other students nationally. Although gaps are smaller in mathematics, they have been growing over this period.

Achievement data presented by leaders indicates that 2015 will see an improvement in achievement for disadvantaged students, with the proportions making expected progress in English and mathematics rising to 50% and 64% respectively.

Leadership and management

Leaders have recognised the seriousness of the poor and declining achievement of disadvantaged students, and the failure of previous strategies that they were using in the hope of reversing the decline. As a result, this academic year has seen a very different approach to supporting disadvantaged students in the academy. Leaders have established a 'Management and Leadership Group' (MLG) that has researched good practice, decided on appropriate strategies and is now leading their implementation across the academy. The approach is enthusiastic, energetic and has been successful in focussing and galvanising staff at all levels. Some impact of the new approach is evident, but it will not be possible to fully evaluate the effectiveness of these actions until after the summer's examination results.

While the academy's revised approach has much to commend it, senior leaders and governors are still not taking a sufficiently strategic overview of the actions being taken. For example, leaders are not systematically collating and analysing data for disadvantaged students as a group and so are not able to evaluate the success of the many actions that are being taken.

External support

Leaders and governors have commissioned external support from an educational consultant who provides them with advice and challenge over range of school-improvement issues. In addition, leaders have been proactive in seeking out examples of best practice in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. They have made several visits to other schools and brought back ideas and strategies that are now being implemented at Madeley.

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

- Leaders and governors are fully committed to helping all students, especially disadvantaged students, to achieve their potential. They have been successful in ensuring that the academy's staff are equally committed to this moral purpose.
- Leaders have acted decisively this year in changing the academy's approach to supporting its disadvantaged students. The new, whole-academy, focus this year has been embraced enthusiastically by all staff.
- Staff have very detailed knowledge of each disadvantaged student in academy. As a result, a range of effective individualised pastoral interventions are in place to support these students. This is particularly true for disadvantaged, disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- The Management and Leadership Group (MLG), formed in September 2014, has brought energy, enthusiasm and an imaginative approach to improving the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- The MLG has developed a detailed pupil premium plan, based on careful research of best practice. Training has been given to all staff and, as a result, teachers are clear about their responsibility to know the disadvantaged students that they teach, but also to track their achievement and to intervene to accelerate their progress.
- Some impact of the actions being taken is already apparent. For example, the attendance of disadvantaged students has improved by 3% this year and the number of fixed term exclusions of disadvantaged students has fallen sharply.
- Staff have worked hard to build strong relationships with parents of disadvantaged students and have been effective in encouraging more parents to attend meetings at the academy.

- The priority to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students is evident in appraisal targets that have been set for several members of staff.
- Leaders regularly collect a rich variety of data about all students, including disadvantaged students.
- Almost all disadvantaged students who left the academy in 2014 moved to further education, employment, or training.
- Governors are committed, well informed and have good access to academy data.

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

- Although the academy's data indicates that 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 and nationally.
- The abundant data collected by staff has not been systematically collated and analysed for disadvantaged students as a discrete group. This has made it difficult for leaders to judge the impact of the strategies being used to improve outcomes for these students.
- There has been too much focus on gaps that exist in academy, rather than raising expectations by comparing outcomes for the academy's disadvantaged students with those for other students nationally.
- Although the breadth of involvement of staff is a significant strength of the academy's approach, there is currently no one person who is responsible and accountable for the outcomes of disadvantaged students. This has led to a lack of a single strategic overview of strategies being used and weaknesses in analysing data and evaluating impact.
- Although some targets do exist within the pupil premium plan and in individual teachers' appraisal statements, they are not specific enough. This means that it is difficult for leaders and governors to judge the success of actions or to hold individuals to account.
- Analysis of achievement data has focussed too much on measures of attainment rather than measures of progress. The small number of disadvantaged students in the academy means that attainment may vary considerably from one year to the next, but progress should not.
- There is a lack of clarity within the governing body's committee structure as to where responsibility for disadvantaged students lies. The

achievement of disadvantaged students forms a small part of the Curriculum, Achievement and Teaching Committee's remit, but other aspects, such as pupil premium spending plans, fall within the remit of the Pupil Welfare Committee. As a result, governors are not challenging and holding leaders to account as effectively as they should.

Priorities for further improvement

- Regularly monitor disadvantaged students as a group, across a range of measures, including attendance, behaviour and progress, across all year groups. Wherever possible, compare the data for the academy's disadvantaged students with national benchmarks.
- Clarify the structures in governance and in the academy, both at senior and middle leader levels, so that it is clearly understood who is responsible for improving outcomes for disadvantaged students.
- Ensure that governors are provided with succinct evaluative data analysis and use it to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the outcomes of disadvantaged students.
- Sharpen and align the targets and milestones in action plans and appraisal targets so that individuals can be held to account for improving the outcomes for disadvantaged students in the academy.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire, to 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

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

- For academies use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Regional Schools Commissioner

The letters should also be copied electronically to:

- The relevant Senior HMI
- The relevant Regional Director
- Each member of the inspection team