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12 June 2015

Craig D'Cunha  
Suffolk New Academy  
Mallard Way  
Ipswich  
IP2 9LR

Dear Mr D'Cunha,

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Suffolk New Academy**

Following my visit with Jenny Usher, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 10–11 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs.

I am copying this letter and monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of the New Academies Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lawrence  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress, particularly of the most able students, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of how much students can achieve, how well they should present their work and their standards of behaviour, especially in mathematics
  - focusing more closely on helping students to acquire and use the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, and ensuring that these skills are taught in subjects other than English and mathematics
  - marking students' work in such a way that they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve it.
- Revise the curriculum in order to:
  - ensure there is sufficient time allocated for the core subjects of English and mathematics
  - provide a curriculum that builds upon students' prior knowledge and skills, especially in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the behaviour and attendance of students by:
  - eradicating poor behaviour in lessons to ensure that students' opportunities to learn are not compromised through noisy and persistent disruption
  - all staff challenging poor behaviour around the academy and dealing with it according to the academy's agreed procedures
  - developing systems to encourage good attendance.
- Revise the performance management programme within the academy to ensure that all teachers have clear targets that relate to the success of their students so that they can be held to account for their students' achievement.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing robust systems for reviewing and evaluating the quality of teaching and students' achievement to provide leaders with a clear and accurate picture of the academy's effectiveness
  - using the results of these evaluations to draw up sharply focused plans for improvement.
- Communicate more effectively with parents and take action to restore their confidence in the academy.
- Make more effective use of the pupil premium funds to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students.

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

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 – 11 June 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal and other senior leaders and groups of staff and students. They also undertook telephone discussions with the Chair of the academy's Board of Trustees, and a representative of the trust which intends to sponsor the academy from September 2015.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, the Associate Principal has left the academy. The board of trustees for the sponsoring trust, the New Academies Trust, are also all trustees of the Active Learning Trust, which is planning to take over the direct sponsorship of the academy from September. In September, the academy will move into new purpose-built premises and adopt a new name, the Chantry Academy.

### **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

The academy's own information indicates that the achievement of Year 11 students at the end of Key Stage 4 in July this year will be stronger than in it was in 2014. The enhanced programmes of revision and support organised for these students, together with improved systems for moderating the assessment of their work, are evidence supporting the prediction of improved achievement. However, there is still too much variability within achievement in key subject areas. The academy has rightly prioritised developments to improve progress in mathematics, but results for students are predicted to remain considerably lower in mathematics than in English.

Achievement is improving in all year groups within the academy, but the rate of improvement is highly variable. Progress in Year 7 has been particularly strong, but the improvement of achievement in Year 9 has not been rapid enough.

The academy has started to improve the achievement of all students. It has also adopted a range of sensible strategies specifically to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged students. However, there has not yet been sufficient time for these to have had an impact and so the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others is not yet narrowing.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is improving. The proportion of inadequate teaching is reducing, but has not been fully eliminated. There is some particularly strong teaching in the academy and leaders are seeking to ensure that this practice is

spread successfully through a comprehensive programme of training, coaching and mentoring.

Teachers are raising their expectations of what students can achieve in lessons. The academy is currently developing a new curriculum which strives to develop students' skills on entry to the academy to enable them to be successful at GCSE. This initiative has successfully encouraged staff to expect more of what students can achieve in planning learning in lessons. Although this action is raising teachers' aspirations for what students can achieve, the academy has not developed the specific strategies needed to challenge and stretch the most-able students.

There is improvement in the quality of marking. A common feedback sheet is used widely across different departments designed to encourage a response from students to their teachers' comments. Written feedback also increasingly gives subject-specific advice. Teachers routinely draw attention to poor presentation in students' work and, as a result, the overall quality of presentation is getting better. Teachers regularly mark for literacy, correcting errors in spelling and grammar. Students' literacy is further enhanced across the curriculum by a successful focus on them writing more in subjects, such as in history. The development of students' numerical skills across different subjects is less successfully embedded in practice

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

Staff and students say that there has been a marked improvement in behaviour and these views are supported by evidence from this inspection. Staff appreciate the clarity of the new 'consequences and rewards' system for sanctioning poor behaviour and commending positive attitudes. The system is increasingly applied consistently. Academy records show that the number of occasions on which students need to be removed from lessons, or temporarily excluded from the academy, are declining.

As a result of the more rigorous system to manage behaviour, conduct in lessons and around the academy is generally calm and orderly. However, students' attitudes towards their learning are still not routinely positive enough in all lessons, particularly in classes of lower attainers. These negative attitudes limit the progress some students make.

Attendance is improving and persistent absence is declining. The improvement is because the academy has adopted meticulous systems for tracking and responding to absence. However, rates of attendance are not yet in line with national averages.

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

The Principal has successfully enhanced and exploited a growing sense of optimism among staff about the future of the academy. The reorganisation of the senior

leadership team's responsibilities has created a leadership structure that ensures a clearer focus on the academy's strategic priorities.

Robust self-evaluation processes have been established to ensure the academy's development plans are much sharper and entirely fit for purpose. The new performance management policy incorporates specific targets for students' achievement and is better adapted to ensure the effective monitoring of the quality of teaching across the academy.

Systems of self-evaluation and development planning are less effective in departmental and pastoral teams. Teachers in charge of subjects do not currently produce any strategic plan for development priorities within their own areas. The academy has not established robust systems for ensuring that students' achievement is monitored effectively across each year group. However, the recent change to a system of personal support for students based on year groups provides the academy with an opportunity to develop this further.

Academy leaders have successfully reorganised the curriculum so that English and mathematics have more teaching time. The academy plans to increase further the time allocated to these subjects from September 2015. Both subjects are using extra time effectively, although the change has, so far, had more positive impact on achievement in English than in mathematics.

Academy leaders acknowledge that the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and others are not closing quickly enough. Until recently, the academy did not effectively monitor how it spent its pupil premium grant. (The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged students – those eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.) It has recently undertaken a careful internal check of its spending and has drawn up detailed plans for future improvement. An external review of pupil premium spending has still to be completed to further inform planning.

The academy has greatly increased the channels through which it communicates with parents. It has held a 'parents' forum' every half-term and these have been well attended. The Principal's weekly online 'blog' has provided parents with regular updates on the life of the academy. The academy's consultation on its change of name has given the local community an important opportunity to contribute to its future. New behavioural systems involve much greater parental communication over issues such as sanctions and attendance.

Since the previous governing body of the academy resigned in March 2015, responsibility for local governance has rested with the board of trustees. This is an interim arrangement until the sponsorship of the academy is formally transferred in September 2015, when a new, full governing body will be recruited. This development is a high priority for the academy, as these current, interim

arrangements for governance are ineffective. The board of trustees has focused successfully upon a wide range of practical responsibilities, including staff reorganisation and the move into new premises. However, it has not had sufficient capacity to pay appropriate attention to monitoring standards and achievement. Once a new governing body is established, the academy intends to commission an external evaluation of its effectiveness.

### **External support**

The Active Learning Trust has responded rapidly and effectively to requests from the academy for support. This support includes that for the mathematics department, where collaboration is taking place with a partner academy. Help from the Active Learning Trust has also provided valuable consultancy on behaviour and safety, attendance and leadership. Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the sponsor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that its statement of action is fit for purpose. However, when the formal transfer of sponsorship occurs in September next, these plans await revision to ensure they are appropriate for the new context.