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18 June 2015

Christine Woods
Principal
Ormiston Endeavour Academy
Defoe Road
Ipswich
IP1 6SG

Dear Mrs Woods

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ormiston Endeavour Academy

Following my visit with Richard Spencer, Associate Inspector, to your academy on 17 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, Ormiston's Regional Director and Chair of the Project Board, and two senior leaders. You took us on a tour of the academy. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated. The academy's single central record was also checked.

Context

At the time of the inspection, almost all the senior leadership team had been in post for just one term. You started as Principal in April, following the departure of the previous Principal. Since the inspection, three curriculum leaders have resigned; a head of mathematics has been appointed for September, and temporary

appointments have been made for leadership of the English and science departments.

Following the inspection, the Academy Trust replaced the local governing body with an Interim Executive Board (IEB), comprising four members. The Project Board, established in June 2014, provides monthly reports to the IEB.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium was undertaken on 5 June. The external review of governance recommended in the inspection report has not been undertaken because the governing body has been replaced.

The inspection report was not published until 14 April.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Despite the delay in the publication of the report, the Academy Trust has acted swiftly to bolster leadership and implement plans for the academy's recovery. The statement of action sets out a comprehensive set of appropriate actions and resources to support improvement, including using expertise from the Teaching School. The timescale for removal of special measures is realistic and suitably ambitious. Robust action has been taken to address weaknesses in governance. This has strengthened procedures for monitoring the academy's progress and reporting to the appropriate authority. Although the IEB has had only one meeting, members are well informed and able to provide challenge and support, both for senior leaders and the Academy Trust.

Like the statement of action, the academy's improvement plan is impressively comprehensive and addresses each of the priorities set out in the inspection report. Sensibly, the plans also include actions to maintain and develop other important aspects of the academy's work, alongside the identified priorities. The plans are routinely reviewed, to check that everything is on track, against the detailed success criteria listed against each planned action. This rigour is laudable, but currently too much time is spent reporting on progress rather than driving improvement, and there is an over-reliance on the Principal for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Although you, as Principal, are clear about what needs to be done and confident in conveying your expectations, the academy's senior leadership team does not have this clarity and self-assurance. Essential work has started to support the development of middle leaders, particularly subject leaders, so they can lead improvement and be held accountable for this. Our discussions highlighted the need for reliable assessment information, so that the impact of actions can be gauged accurately.

As Principal, you have brought sharp focus and renewed impetus to steering and driving the academy's improvement. There has been appropriate emphasis on the need for clear communication and greater consistency between staff at all levels. Central to this has been the need for greater challenge, with the mantra of 'excellence is standard'. Common expectations have been established for lesson planning, behaviour management and marking. There are signs that staff have embraced these requirements, but recent observations of teaching highlight the wide variation in the quality of pupils' learning and progress.

The academy is well supported by the Ormiston Academy Trust and also by the Talented Leaders Programme. External reviews by the Trust's external adviser balance well the need for constructive criticism and support. The review of pupil premium highlights a number of leadership and management issues, and priorities for improvement. It is too early to see any significant impact from this audit.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

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

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint NQTs.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- The lead inspector