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10 June 2015

Mrs Claire Whitmore  
Campion School  
Kislingbury Road  
Bugbrooke  
Northampton  
NN7 3QG

Dear Mrs Whitmore

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Campion School**

Following my visit to your academy on 9 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**

Meetings took place with the headteacher and senior leaders with responsibility for assessment and data, attendance and the performance of disadvantaged students. Further meetings were held with the head of sixth form, the Year 9 achievement coach and the parent support adviser. I also met with two groups of students. A range of documentation relating to the achievement of disadvantaged students was scrutinised, including: current achievement data; attendance and exclusion records; case studies of individual students; the academy's development plan; self-evaluation documentation; and governing body minutes. Along with a member of the senior leadership team, I conducted a scrutiny of students' work. A conversation took place with the Chair of the Governing Body by telephone.

## Context

The academy has undergone extensive change in recent years. A new headteacher took up post in January 2014 and there have been significant staffing changes. The senior leadership team and faculties have been re-structured and roles and responsibilities re-defined. In the summer of 2014, a review took place of the leadership of the achievement of disadvantaged students and this is now the shared responsibility of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher - assessment and data. Achievement coaches, with responsibility to support the progress of disadvantaged students have been appointed and within each faculty there is now a 'pupil premium champion' to oversee the progress of these students at subject level. A parent support adviser, employed by the local cluster of schools, now works with students and their families.

The academy is a larger than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average for 2014, although the numbers of these students are increasing. In 2014, 33 students completed Year 11. A third of these students achieved five A\*-C grades including English and mathematics, compared to almost two thirds of their peers. These students did not make the same rates of progress as their peers in English and mathematics.

As a result of the leadership of the headteacher, there has been a 'step-change' in the focus on the achievement of disadvantaged students. The re-structure of the leadership team and improved accountability systems have ensured that the achievement and attendance of these students are key priorities and are high profile. The school development plan has appropriate focus on the improved achievement and attendance of these students, although some of the actions within the plan require more frequent milestones to ensure a rapid pace of improvement.

Governors were surprised and disappointed by the GCSE results in 2014. The Chair of the Governing Body is aware of the challenge faced by the headteacher to improve the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged students and is working with her to address these. A member of the governing body leads on the achievement of disadvantaged students and receives regular updates about their progress. Moving forward, the governing body must ensure that it is appropriately well informed and skilled to ensure that governors have an accurate view of the progress students are making towards the targets set, including those for attendance, and are able to challenge senior leaders to ensure these are met.

The headteacher and senior leaders accept that they are driving a 'culture shift' within the academy and are now addressing previously low expectations of what disadvantaged students can achieve. Achievement coaches have been appointed to support disadvantaged students within year groups. These are experienced and qualified individuals who provide academic support to disadvantaged students and also oversee their performance at regular intervals. One achievement coach spoke

about her work with one student to change the science class he was working in so that he could work at a higher level. The achievement coach felt able to be a listening ear to the student whilst also having the professional qualities to act on their behalf. The work of achievement coaches, and the impact of this work on individual students, is monitored regularly by senior leaders. However, achievement coaches' understanding about the target setting process is not as clear as it could be. They do not have a sufficiently good understanding of the progress individuals should make according to their starting points to enable them to identify and act on underperformance quickly.

The academy is aware that the attendance of disadvantaged students is not good enough, the persistent absence of these students is a concern. Since January 2015 there has been a renewed ambition to ensure that disadvantaged students attend school. The systems for managing attendance are now more streamlined and there is a focus on early intervention to make sure that issues are addressed quickly, this includes work with families. Accountability is now more rigorous and there is a more consistent experience for students and their families.

A parent support worker links with families and students within the academy and across Cygnet, the local cluster of schools. She has established a parenting group to raise awareness of the importance of attendance, supports the transition of students from their primary school into the academy and is heavily involved in preventative work, including developing links across the local community to ensure a more rapid response for students and families in difficulty.

There is a genuine passion to ensure that students attend school. Some good work is taking place and there are some slight signs of improvement, for example the persistent absence of disadvantaged students has reduced. However, there remains much work to be done to ensure that these students want to attend school and receive the support they need to do so.

The information on the achievement of students is comprehensive. Faculty leaders and teachers have detailed information about the students they teach. Progress of students is reviewed regularly, particularly so in the case of the current Year 11, to ensure that they are on track to achieve their targets. When underachievement is identified, teachers and leaders put in place a variety of measures to ensure they catch up. These actions are having some impact and a greater proportion of disadvantaged students are predicted to gain 5A\*-C grades including English and mathematics. However, the targets for some students are set too low in relation to their starting points. This is particularly the case for some higher-ability disadvantaged students.

The work in students' books shows that some teachers still have low expectations of what they can achieve. Too often, teachers accept work that shows little care and does not reflect the ability of the student or the targets that they have been set. In some books seen during the inspection, marking was irregular and students had received insufficient feedback as to how to improve. Students said that they valued

the feedback from their teachers but they would want their work marked more often.

Disadvantaged students receive targeted advice and guidance to help them make well-informed choices at GCSE and for their post-16 courses, this includes comprehensive support to students who wish to continue their studies within the sixth-form provision. The head of sixth form is keen to ensure a personalised approach to the sixth form curriculum offer and is flexible in her efforts to ensure that the courses studied by students are appropriate. All the Year 13 disadvantaged students due to leave the sixth form in 2015 have offers from universities. One Year 12 student said he felt grateful to the academy for the range of experiences he had received and the ways in which he had been supported to develop his leadership skills to support others. A sixth-form curriculum review is currently underway and leaders need to remain mindful of the suitability of this new curriculum to the growing number of high and middle-ability disadvantaged students within the academy.

The support, both pastoral and academic, given to the small number of students who are looked after children is effective. The current data for these students indicates that they are on track to meet the targets that they have been set.

### **External support**

The academy is involved in two school clusters; Cygnet, that includes local primary feeder schools; and SWAN, a group of local secondary schools within the South West of Northampton. Teacher and leader networks take place and good practice shared.

Northamptonshire County Council recently made available to all the schools in the county £500,000 as part of their 'Race to the Top' initiative. The academy made a successful bid to receive £52,500 to establish the 'Upton Learning Hub'. This initiative will support the post-school learning opportunities for disadvantaged students.

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

- the drive, energy and ambition of the headteacher and senior leadership team to ensure that the achievement of disadvantaged students is a key priority
- the quality of the data and tracking systems to help to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is monitored regularly so that support can be given if students fall behind
- the revitalised approach to the attendance of disadvantaged students, particularly the leadership strategy to streamline complex systems and improve the lines of accountability. The work of the family support adviser and the focus on early intervention
- achievement coaches and the support and advice that they provide
- the work of the faculty-based pupil premium champions which helps to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged students are met at subject level in order that appropriate progress is made
- the governing body's awareness of the issues facing disadvantaged students within the school and the role of the pupil premium governor.

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

- current target-setting practice; some targets are set too low for some disadvantaged students, particularly the high and middle ability and some teachers lack clarity as to how to use targets when assessing students' work
- achievement coaches do not yet have a full knowledge and understanding of the progress that students should make in relation to their starting points
- the inconsistent approach to marking and feedback; it is too infrequent and in many cases does not help students to move their learning on
- the work set for disadvantaged students too frequently shows low expectations of what they can achieve
- the limited impact of the Welcome to School provision.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Review the targets that are set for all disadvantaged students to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging.
- Make sure that marking is regular and of high quality and that all leaders are held to account to ensure that the whole school marking policy is consistently applied.
- Make sure that teachers have a true understanding of what students should be achieving based on their starting points and that planning for learning provides sufficient challenge for pupils of all ability levels.
- Review the roles and responsibilities of the achievement coaches and the faculty-level pupil premium champions to make sure there is no overlap, focusing attention on the actions that have the most impact on the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged students.
- Review the Welcome to School provision.
- Carry out a review of the pupil premium.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire Local Authority, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit and The Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**