

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 679 9169  
Direct email: [mathew.mitchell@serco.com](mailto:mathew.mitchell@serco.com)



26 June 2015

Andrew Mackereth  
Principal  
The Parker E-ACT Academy  
Ashby Road  
Daventry  
NN11 0QF

Dear Mr Mackereth

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Parker E-ACT Academy**

Following my visit, to your school with Simon Hollingsworth, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Gwendoline Onyon, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 24–25 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 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 school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive Officer for E-ACT, the DfE Academies' Advisers Unit, the Education Funding Agency, the team inspectors and the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
  - have higher expectations of what students can achieve, particularly in their written work
  - use information on students' performance to set work at the right level of difficulty for students, particularly the most-able
  - apply the academy's policies on marking and behaviour management rigorously and consistently.
  
- Raise the achievement of all groups, especially the most-able students, and particularly in mathematics and science, by:
  - giving students a greater challenge and building on their successes
  - refusing to accept work that is clearly well below students' ability levels
  - marking work regularly and in detail so that students know that their efforts are valued and are able to understand how to make progress
  - preventing the poor behaviour of a minority of students from affecting learning.
  
- Improve behaviour and safety by ensuring that all teachers, including senior teachers, address low-level disruption and other poor behaviour consistently and rigorously.
  
- Ensure that leaders and managers increase students' achievement across all year groups, including the sixth form, and raise the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring middle leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and provide effective support for those teachers who need it
  - replacing the current system used for tracking students' progress with one that is fit for purpose.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of governance, including a specific focus on 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 24–25 June 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised documents, including: the self-evaluation summary; academy information about students' predicted achievement in 2015; the recent review of governance; academy information about the quality of teaching; records of referrals made to external agencies; records on attendance and behaviour; and a sample of students' work in science, mathematics, and English. Meetings were held with the Principal, other senior leaders, five subject leaders, and the progress leader for Years 10 and 11. The lead inspector also met with the system leader for E-ACT and the Chair and five other members of the Governing Body. Inspectors spoke with members of the student senate and a group of sixth form students. An inspector listened to Year 7 students read. Inspectors took into account the 14 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 36 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. They observed 24 parts of lessons, four of which were carried out jointly with members of the senior team.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection, three teachers have left the academy and been replaced by temporary teachers. The academy will be fully staffed in all core subjects from September. Two new teaching assistants and a cover supervisor have commenced work. Three new governors have started, including two parent governors and a governor with expertise in finance. Two new subject leaders for mathematics and science have been recruited from existing staff.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Information provided by the academy shows that, in 2015, there are likely to be some improvements in the overall progress that students make from their starting points, in both mathematics and science, at the end of Year 11. Academy leaders also predict that there will be improvements in the progress that students make in these subjects in most of the younger year groups. However, the progress that Year 11 students are predicted to make in mathematics and science remains lower than national levels. The progress predicted for some groups of students is also of concern. For example, in Year 11, leaders predict that boys will make considerably less progress than girls in English and the most-able students will not achieve well enough in mathematics. Students eligible for pupil premium funding are still not making sufficient progress compared to their peers, although this gap is narrowing in some subjects and year groups. The progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs is not predicted to be rapid enough, particularly in mathematics and science, in both Years 10 and 11. In English, the progress that students make is much stronger, and leaders predict that their progress will be in line with national averages in 2015. Information provided by the academy shows

that, in 2015, there are likely to be improvements in the percentage of students achieving five GCSEs including English and mathematics. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to confirm the accuracy of teachers' data predictions for Year 11, using a strong system of internal and external moderation.

In the sixth form, information provided by the academy shows that there are likely to be some rapid improvements in students' overall achievement, particularly at AS level. Leaders predict that Year 12 students will make accelerated progress from their relatively low starting points. The head of sixth form predicts that the small number of students who are retaking GCSEs in English and mathematics are likely to pass with a grade C or above.

### **The quality of teaching**

Inspectors witnessed further improvements to the overall quality of teaching. However, there is still some variability in the quality of teaching and improvements are not embedded across all subjects. Effective teaching was evident in English, business studies and humanities subjects. Where teaching is the most effective, students are eager to learn and they make rapid progress as a result. Inspectors could see how well some teachers had responded to recent staff training. For example, a number of teachers identify 'lead learners' to organise group learning. Inspectors saw how 'lead learners' help to accelerate the progress of students of all abilities, including the most able. One student said 'I like being a lead learner because it helps me to become more confident.' Teachers' questioning has improved and more teachers use questioning effectively to check students' understanding. Teachers encourage Year 12 students to identify the right resources to support their learning. As a result, Year 12 students are making greater progress and are increasingly well prepared for their next steps in their learning.

Teachers are applying the marking policy more consistently. In some subjects, teachers make effective use of 'reflection time' to encourage students to improve their work. Teachers are planning more carefully to ensure that tasks are matched to students' abilities or particular learning needs. However, in some subjects, teachers' expectations of students' capabilities are not always high enough. As a result, not all students are challenged to achieve their best.

Students' literacy skills are improving. Staff make effective use of the resources available to help them to support students' literacy development. Students now have more planned opportunities for extended writing in other subjects. For example, in business studies, students used a 'learning mat' to support their writing and this also served to provide additional challenge for the most able. However, there are fewer opportunities for less-able students to practise their extended writing. Students in Year 7 are given a variety of opportunities to practise their reading and they understand what to do if they cannot read a particular word. As a result, they

demonstrate a love of reading and have made some rapid gains in their reading ages.

Students say that teachers apply the behaviour policy more consistently. However, they say that a small minority of students still disrupt lessons. This is because not all teachers use the 'alert' system to assist them with addressing students' poor behaviour. As a result, some students say that their learning is interrupted. Most students take pride in their work and their books are well presented.

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

Students' conduct around school is positive. The number of fixed-term exclusions increased at the beginning of the academic year because the Principal takes a firm stance on verbal abuse. The number of incidents of poor behaviour have reduced, and students know that racist or verbal abuse is totally unacceptable. Incidents of bullying are rare, and students say that, when they occur, staff deal with them swiftly.

Students' attitudes to learning are inconsistent but improving, largely as a result of improved teaching. Academy leaders now routinely check students' engagement in lessons. There are some pockets of poor behaviour in some lessons in the younger year groups. A very small minority of staff think that behaviour is not well managed.

Students' overall absence has increased since last year and is above national averages. The absence of disadvantaged students is still too high. The academy has taken some appropriate steps to reduce the proportion of students who are regularly absent. As a result, the proportion of students who are regularly absent has reduced since the last monitoring visit, but it is still too high.

The single central record meets statutory requirements. Systems for safeguarding meet all current requirements, and leaders make appropriate and timely referrals to external agencies when they are concerned that a child may be at risk.

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

Students are highly complimentary about the changes that the Principal has made to the academy. They credit him with 'putting the students first'. His vision for the academy is quickly permeating the school and he has the full support of all the staff who work with him. At the staff briefing, the lead inspector witnessed a strong sense of staff cohesion and well-being. One member of staff said, 'The academy is transformed from a year ago. I am truly proud to work here.' The Principal is extremely well supported by his core team of senior leaders. One member of staff said, 'The Principal and his leadership team are the best I have ever known and are constantly putting things into place to make the academy a better place to be.'

The senior Vice Principal is determined to drive further improvements in teaching. With the support of a team of coaches, she is empowering teachers to try out new ideas in teaching that have proved successful for other staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is accelerating at a rapid pace in most subjects. Leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching is now based on a much wider range of evidence than at the previous monitoring visit. This includes evidence about students' progress, learning walks, book scrutinies and collecting students' opinions. The academy's systems for performance management are robust and relate to the academy improvement priorities. Every member of staff has a target related to the achievement of their disadvantaged students. As a result, the achievement of these students has become a high priority in teachers' planning. The leader for literacy is taking effective action to develop students' literacy skills. Teachers are planning more opportunities for students to produce extended pieces of writing.

The academy's systems for tracking students' progress are increasingly effective. Leaders now track more rigorously the progress of students of different abilities. Subject leaders and teachers welcome the speed in which summaries of their students' achievement are available. Teachers in some subjects are making far greater use of this information to set work at the right level for students, including those students eligible for pupil premium funding. Subject leaders now have a much clearer understanding of their role in developing the teaching and assessment of their colleagues. However, not all subject leaders are sufficiently focused on the progress that students are making in their subjects.

Following the last inspection, the academy has taken positive action to engage with parents. The Friends of Parker Academy (FOPA) has been established and the first meeting was well attended. Leaders conducted a parental survey and quickly responded to the issues raised. Leaders are employing a number of effective strategies to improve attendance at parents' evenings, and those that attend are overwhelmingly positive about the experience. The academy's partnership with parents is improving and more parents are involved in their child's learning.

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is comprehensive. There is a wide range of opportunities to explore values, respect, cultural differences, personal development and other religions. In an assembly, an inspector observed students reflect purposefully on change and personal development. Members of the student senate are well informed about issues of diversity.

The academy's arrangements for careers education and guidance do not include sufficient opportunities for students in Years 8 and 9 to access impartial advice and guidance. However, there are a wide variety of opportunities for sixth form students to explore their next steps in education. All students currently in Year 12 are making applications to university, as compared to about a quarter of students that proceeded to higher education two years ago.

The academy is highly inclusive. Staff work tirelessly with parents and feeder schools to ensure that disabled students and those who have special educational needs are nurtured and cared for. There are comprehensive systems to identify interventions to cater for the additional needs of these students. However, the support that staff provide does not always focus sufficiently well on accelerating the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Consequently not all of these students are making the progress that they are capable of in mathematics and science.

The head of sixth form is starting to have a positive impact on the achievement of students in the sixth form. She has developed effective systems to develop the quality of teaching and works effectively with subject leaders to identify underachievement. Sixth form students speak positively about the system for mentoring, and there is evidence that this is helping to improve their grades. There is a comprehensive tutorial programme. Sixth form students now have far greater understanding of the potential risks to their health and well-being.

The addition of new governors has served to strengthen the skills and expertise of the governing body. The governing body focuses on addressing the priority areas outlined in the academy action plan and checks that the academy's actions are making a difference. Members of the governing body know the strengths and development needs of the academy. The academy's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Governors have an improved understanding of how additional funding is spent and whether it is making a difference for eligible students. It is evident that governors work effectively with academy leaders. The action plan notes that 'working alongside the senior leadership team, the governors enjoy seamless cooperation and speak as one.' A review of governance has taken place and it rightly identifies that governors need more training in relation to their understanding of achievement data.

### **External support**

The support provided by the system leader for E-ACT is now strong because it is well thought-out. He has built an effective relationship with academy leaders. Leaders and governors value his advice, challenge and support. The system leader has worked to support the governors in their transition from the interim executive board to a local governing body. He responds quickly to requests from leaders. For example, he has brokered appropriate support for the external validation of teachers' assessments.