

STEM Academy

Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 139793

Name of lead inspector: Stewart Jackson HMI

Last day of inspection: 1 July 2015

Type of provider: 16-19 Academy

Address: 263-269 City Road
London
EC1V 1JX

Telephone number: 020 3301 3620

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to STEM Academy following publication of the inspection report on 26 March 2015, which found the academy to be inadequate overall.

Since the previous monitoring visit, governors have been in talks, now well advanced, with an academy trust. It is now almost certain that STEM Academy will join this trust on 1 September 2015. As a result of these ongoing talks, managers at all levels within the academy have not been able to focus closely on addressing the key areas for improvement identified in the inspection report and during the first re-inspection monitoring visit. Managers are uncertain about their individual responsibility for implementing the actions from the post inspection action plan and, as a result, progress in many areas is too slow. Managers are now beginning the process of working with representatives from the academy trust, but it is too soon to evaluate what improvements this might bring.

Themes

Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Managers have been too slow in reviewing and improving the current arrangements for evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. While they recognise the broad range of evidence that they require to make these judgements, they have not yet put in place suitable procedures for the systematic collection or evaluation of this evidence.
- Senior managers have insufficient oversight of the arrangements to share the good teaching practice that already exists across the academy. As a result, not all teachers participate and those that do are not gaining maximum benefit.
- Opportunities for teachers to improve their practice are hampered because managers are not using a systematic approach to identifying areas that individual teachers need to improve and do not provide teachers with good training.
- Managers have implemented a series of well-considered whole-academy training events that all teachers attend. It is too early to judge any improvement in the overall quality of teaching, but teachers have found the training useful and are able to give good examples of how they have adapted their own practice in the light of the training.
- The overall students' attendance rate for the academic year just completed is very low at just over 80%. Too many students are not benefiting from their planned lessons.
- Teachers have better access to reliable data about students to inform their planning. Teachers and managers use data relating to students' prior achievements well to set ambitious targets for students' achievements and to monitor students' progress against their target grades.

Insufficient improvement for students

Improve the performance management of staff

- The performance management of staff remains inadequate. The majority of teachers and managers have not had an appraisal in this academic year. Neither managers nor teachers have individual targets or actions relating to how they should improve their performance. As a result, staff at all levels are not properly accountable for the achievements of their students or the areas that they manage. Teachers are not benefiting from opportunities to discuss with their managers areas of their teaching practice that they need to improve and how they should go about doing so. Managers are not accountable for the performance of their areas of responsibility because they do not have targets that are closely aligned to the priorities set out in the post-inspection action plan.
- Managers use the capability policy to minimise the continued underperformance of a very small proportion of teachers, but it is too soon to judge the effect of this on the quality of teaching and students' achievements.

Insufficient improvement for students**Improve students' opportunities to develop work-related skills**

- Students are benefiting from increased opportunities to develop their understanding of the world of work, particularly in relation to the STEM subjects, through trips and visits, internships over the summer break, external speakers from universities and links with an expanding number of local and national employers. Students value these opportunities and develop higher aspirations and knowledge of a broader range of careers that they can move on to when they leave the academy. However, managers have been slow to develop suitable in-house enrichment opportunities.
- The proportion of students who are able to access formal work experience opportunities remains too low. Managers do not have clear targets for increasing the number of employers that they work with to provide work experience opportunities.

Reasonable improvement for students**Improve the support for individual students' needs**

- Students benefit from an increased number of teaching assistants who are deployed effectively to help individuals with specific learning needs as well as more generally to support whole groups of students in lessons. Not all teachers involve teaching assistants in the planning of lessons and therefore the teaching assistants are not clear exactly how they could best be supporting students.

- Students value the additional revision classes during their holiday periods, with high levels of attendance among students that staff identified as needing to improve.
- Since the previous inspection, teachers are making better use of students' prior achievement data, as well as their own assessment of students' progress, to plan and implement lessons that more effectively develop the knowledge and skills that individual students require. Managers now communicate far more closely with students' parents or guardians and their previous schools to ensure that they have relevant information to support individual students.
- Good arrangements are in place for identifying the support needs of students enrolling in September 2015. Managers have indicated that they will be identifying those students most likely to be at risk of not achieving or underperforming through a more thorough induction process. They have good plans in place to intervene at the start of students' courses to ensure that effective and personalised support is targeted at those students who need it. It is too soon to judge any improvement resulting from these initiatives, but teachers have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities during the induction period.

Reasonable improvement for students

Ensure that students are on suitable courses

- Managers have ensured that students will have appropriate qualifications for the courses that they want to study. Within the constraints of the curriculum offer, they have set up alternative pathways for students who wish to study STEM subjects but who have not yet quite reached the levels required to study A levels. It is too early to judge the effect of these new entry criteria prior to the enrolment process for new students in September.
- Managers have useful arrangements in place to enable students to improve their English and mathematics. These arrangements also include students who have already achieved a grade C in English and/or mathematics GCSE, but who require a higher grade to progress successfully to university.
- A minority of teachers and students still wrongly believe that vocational pathways are easier or less worthwhile than A-level pathways.

Reasonable improvement for students

Improve the effectiveness of self-assessment

- Leaders have not evaluated the performance of the academy during 2014/15 academic year and therefore there are currently no targets or actions for improvement in 2015/16.
- When considering the students' experience at the academy, managers have insufficient focus on evaluating or improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not routinely collect and analyse students' views.
- Managers are not monitoring well enough progress towards meeting targets as set out in the post-inspection action plan. It is unclear from the updates exactly what has and has not been accomplished and leaders and managers are not able to give a thorough evaluation of progress. Academy governors and leaders are not able to gauge progress effectively because they have not set measurable short-term targets and milestones and have not ensured that each individual target is aligned to the responsibilities of one key manager.
- Managers have not yet ensured that data they are using and presenting to governors, are accurate.
- Managers are not analysing data well enough or in enough detail to inform them of progress against targets or to plan for improvement. For example, they have not analysed attendance data by course, group or teacher to ascertain whether there are particular cohorts of students for whom attendance is a problem. Managers do not have a clear understanding of whether low student attendance is linked to poor teaching.

Insufficient improvement for students**Increase the capacity of the senior management team**

- Senior leaders have appointed two new managers to increase the capacity of the senior management team. However, due to uncertainties about managers' future roles and responsibilities in September, when the academy becomes part of the academy trust, the rate of improvements as a result of the increase in capacity is slow. Managers spend too much of their time performing routine tasks and insufficient time on strategic areas that will improve students' achievements and experience.

Insufficient improvement for students**Ensure that students have an understanding of the diverse nature of the communities in which they live**

- The majority of governors and staff have received useful training relating to current national concerns about radicalisation and extremism. Current indications are that all staff will receive this training by the end of this academic year. As a

result, teachers demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

- Managers have raised students' awareness of issues relating to radicalisation and extremism through a series of useful and well-considered poster campaigns. Arrangements to incorporate these themes more formally into the academy's tutorial programme are well underway, with the intention that they will be in place for the start of the new academic year.
- Teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in promoting British values more generally to students requires improvement and managers have not made sufficient progress in ensuring that this critical aspect will be integrated into teaching programmes.

Insufficient improvement for students

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted