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10 December 2015

Mrs Pamela Massett  
Principal  
Hemsworth Arts and Community Academy  
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West Yorkshire  
WF9 4AB

Dear Mrs Massett

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hemsworth Arts and Community Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 26 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the Wakefield City Academy Trust (WCAT) are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good academy. The academy and WCAT should take further action to:

- refine the improvement plan so that it is always clear, especially to governors, what the intended impact of planned actions will be
- highlight more clearly the role governors will play in checking whether suitable progress is being made, particularly in relation to improving teaching

- provide appropriate training and support for governors to help them improve their effectiveness and ability to challenge the academy.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with four governors, the Chair of the WCAT Board and a senior director from WCAT. I met with a group of pupils from Years 9 to 11. I undertook two learning walks, one with the head of mathematics and one with the head of geography. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the post-inspection action plan, your monitoring of teaching and a sample of pupils' work.

## **Context**

A vice-principal, the head of science and the head of Year 11 have left since the time of the last inspection. New subject leaders have started in science, geography and business, information technology and enterprise (BITE). Three associate assistant principals have been appointed from within the academy along with a new head of Year 11.

## **Main findings**

You have made a positive start to tackling the areas for improvement highlighted in the recent inspection. You have rightly made improving the consistency and quality of teaching, marking and feedback one of your top priorities. Regular weekly coaching sessions are helping teachers improve their teaching. This is because mentors are focusing on 'bite-sized' aspects of teaching that need specific improvement and mentors provide effective help and support and carefully check whether progress is being made.

Pupils I spoke with are also starting to see improvements. They are keen to explain how improvements to marking and feedback are helping them to learn more. Pupils are also starting to see that in some lessons, especially mathematics, levels of challenge are increasing. However, pupils also highlight that there are still lessons which are not engaging because teachers do not explain things well enough. This leads to some pupils losing concentration and misbehaving.

You have achieved some quick 'wins' with regard to improving pupils' appearance and behaviour. Pupils I met looked smart, with their shirts tucked in and ties worn correctly. Pupils say there has been a 'crackdown' on wearing the correct uniform and improving behaviour in and out of lessons. Clear, well-understood consequences are in place to tackle low-level disruption alongside the use of rewards such as scratch cards. Academy information shows that as a result of this work, behaviour is improving, exclusions are reducing and attendance is improving.

Middle leaders are starting to work together and learn from each other. There is a real sense of the development of a team. Middle leaders feel greater levels of accountability now for improving teaching in their departments. Teachers have benefited from working with each other to see the quality of each other's marking and this 'book buddy' approach is helping to improve consistency. Some middle leaders are making faster progress than others in tackling weaknesses. For example, some teachers are not following the academy's marking and feedback policy and these teachers have not been challenged well enough by middle leaders.

Governors have benefited recently from new members joining the governing body, bringing with them a wider range of experience from various backgrounds. This has helped governors recognise how certain aspects of their work could be improved. Link governors are developing their role and this is helping to raise the profile of governors in the academy. However, governors are less confident and capable in their strategic role. Academy policies are not always reviewed and updated in a timely manner and governors are not clear enough on the role they play in evaluating the progress the academy is making, especially in relation to improving teaching. Academy plans are generally clear and appropriate but they could be an even more helpful tool for improvement, especially for governors. This is because occasionally, actions within the academy plan do not show clearly enough what improvements are expected or by when. This is limiting governors' ability to effectively challenge leaders and monitor the progress being made.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

WCAT support is valued by the academy. As a result of attending useful WCAT network meetings, senior leaders have started to change the way they monitor the quality of teaching, and performance management has been refined. Middle leaders, especially in English, mathematics and science, have benefited from support that is helping them improve their leadership. However, not enough support has been provided by the trust in helping governors improve. A planned external review of governance was cancelled at the request of WCAT. This has been rescheduled for early 2016. This has led to an unacceptable delay and slowed the progress governors are making.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

**Phil Smith**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**