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11 December 2015

Mr G Watson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Watson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tewkesbury School**

Following my visit to your school on Friday 4 December 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. Please also thank the staff and pupils I met during the visit.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the academy was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a member of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection and the first monitoring visit. The academy's self-evaluation and improvement plan were evaluated. Observations of lessons were undertaken with academy leaders. In lessons, the inspector evaluated the academy's most recent assessment information for that class and looked at pupils' work and talked with them about it.

## Context

This was the second monitoring visit since the section 5 inspection, which judged the academy to require improvement. A new head of mathematics took up post at the start of the academic year in September 2015. A number of other staff changes took place at this time.

## Main findings

The focus of this second monitoring visit was to determine if the improvements identified in the first monitoring visit in March 2015 had led to sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement, and to check that further progress had been made on the actions recommended in the letter sent to the academy following the visit.

- The 2015 GCSE examination results showed a marked improvement on 2014. The academy now at least meets, and often exceeds, the national average for all key indicators. The proportion of pupils obtaining at least five good GCSE including English and mathematics rose significantly from 50% in 2014 to 70% in 2015. This is well above the national figure, even though pupils enter the academy with skills in reading and writing in line with the national averages.
- The proportions of pupils making, and exceeding, the expected progress in English were well above the national average. In mathematics, the proportions were at least in line with the national average and above for most groups of pupils. The achievement of the most-able pupils in mathematics was in line with the national figure. Current Year 11 pupils are on track to do better than this, although some mathematics teachers in all year groups need to provide higher levels of challenge for these most-able pupils.
- Good achievement was sustained in languages and humanities and in a range of other subjects. Achievement in science improved significantly.
- Academy leaders are fully aware that girls did better than boys in 2015. They are monitoring this carefully for current pupils and the academy's own data indicate that this is now much less of a concern.
- The achievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds rose significantly in English and mathematics to be much closer to, and in some cases better than, that of other pupils nationally. The gap in achievement between these pupils and others in the academy narrowed markedly.
- More than half of disadvantaged pupils follow a curriculum matched to their specific needs and aspirations. They spend one day each week following a range of vocational subjects in Gloucester College. This means that they do not have the full set of eight subjects included in

achievement measures; this skews the academy's published data and gives a misleading view of the overall achievement of these pupils.

- Many disadvantaged pupils do not join the academy's sixth form. However, academy leaders monitor carefully the post-16 routes they follow, mostly in the college. All progress to suitable programmes and are successful.
- The achievement of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs also improved and they achieve well.
- Achievement in the sixth form has risen year on year for the last three years, from when the current sixth form senior leader took up post. Achievement in almost all subjects is now in line with the national average. The good examination results for learners at the end Year 12 in 2015 indicate that achievement is well set to rise further. These improvements are the result of good leadership and improved teaching. In a few lessons, teachers still need to make better use of teaching time. Some of the work currently undertaken in lessons could be completed by learners in their independent study time as preparation or as a follow-up activity.
- A small minority of teachers in all year groups still need to make better use of the information they have about pupils' current achievement to ensure that all make as much progress as they can. The best practice in giving supportive, but challenging, feedback to pupils about their work and how to improve it is not spread widely enough.
- Pupils' attendance has improved year on year and is still improving. Comparing current attendance information with the same time last year shows improvements for all year cohorts and groups of pupils. However, it is still not good enough. Academy leaders undertake a very detailed analysis of attendance information and are taking effective actions to address concerns about individual and small groups of pupils. They work effectively with the local authority to initiate legal proceedings against some parents as soon as this becomes necessary.
- The headteacher and other academy leaders have an accurate view of what has improved and what still needs to be done. The monitoring of pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and attitudes, and of the quality of teaching is systematic and rigorous. Leaders ensure that all assessment information is reliable and accurate. The actions taken by leaders have led to improvements in key areas across the academy. They are focused well on what is required to ensure that the academy is at least good. They are supported and challenged well by the governing body.

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**

The academy works well with other schools in the area and nearby to obtain specific support on, for example, improving attendance. Academy leaders determine what support is needed and where it can be best provided. They carefully evaluate the effectiveness of this support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

James Sage  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**