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16 December 2015

Christine Woods  
Principal  
Ormiston Endeavour Academy  
Defoe Road  
Ipswich  
IP1 6SG

Dear Mrs Woods

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Ormiston Endeavour Academy**

Following my visit with Jennifer Carpenter, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 1 and 2 December 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2015. 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:

**Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

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 for Education, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk local authority.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2015**

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy, in order to raise pupils' attainment, by:
  - setting work that provides the right level of challenge for pupils and builds on their prior learning
  - improving the quality of marking across all subjects so that pupils are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve
  - making more effective use of teaching assistants to support teachers in the classroom and to support pupils' learning
  - using questioning more effectively to challenge and engage pupils, develop their speaking and listening skills, and encourage them to develop their reasoning and extend their thinking
  - ensuring that pupils develop a pride in the presentation and quality of their work.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
  - subject leaders all work effectively to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement in their subject
  - the academy's policies are applied consistently throughout the academy
  - the impact of the support provided through the pupil premium is rigorously monitored
  - conducting an external review of governance.
  
- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
  - ensuring that all staff consistently follow the academy's behaviour policies and challenge infringements of the code of conduct
  - further reduce avoidable absence and stress to pupils the importance of attendance.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 December 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), Ormiston's Regional Director and Chair of the Progress Board, nominated senior and middle leaders, and a group of pupils.

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring visit, the academy has implemented its planned leadership changes, restructuring the senior and middle leadership roles and realigning their responsibilities. English, mathematics and science have been under new leadership since the start of term. The head of mathematics joined the school in September 2015, and English and science have had interim heads of faculty.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Results were poor in the most recent GCSE examinations in 2015. The unvalidated Key Stage 4 outcomes were lower than for the previous two years, declining to below the government's floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at Key Stage 4). Only 39% of Year 11 pupils gained five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, with only approximately half of pupils making the progress expected in English and mathematics from their starting points in Year 7. Groups identified as underachieving in the inspection report in January did no better in 2015. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers widened rather than narrowing. Too few of the most-able pupils achieved the highest grades.

The academy can point to a number of contextual factors that impeded its improvement in the six months following the inspection in January, but the disappointing results show that the planned actions had too little impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Teachers' predictions proved overoptimistic, and the unreliability of assessments undermined the academy's ability to intervene and support pupils. This was because teachers did not accurately identify when pupils were falling behind.

Senior leaders have taken suitable steps to strengthen assessment and sharpen the tracking of pupils' progress, but it is too early to judge whether this new approach is sufficiently reliable or used well. The academy has set appropriately ambitious targets for 2016, but projections based on current assessment information for Year 11 pupils indicate that there needs to be rapid improvement if these are to be realised. Evidence from this inspection shows that pupils make good progress in the stronger subjects that have traditionally done well, such as art and photography.

This is because teachers set high expectations and skilfully motivate and engage the pupils so that learning is sharply focused and well paced. Elsewhere, both in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3, the pace of learning is too variable. Pupils will work hard in one lesson, taking great care and paying attention to detail, but do very little of any quality in the next. Weaknesses in basic skills, including basic numeracy, speaking, listening, spelling, punctuation and grammar, are a barrier for many pupils in making more rapid progress. Standards in mathematics and English are not rising quickly enough. There remains wide variation in the quality of pupils' presentation.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching is improving, but too many weaknesses persist. Pupils' learning is not yet challenging enough, the pace of learning is too pedestrian, and there is wide variation in the progress made by pupils in the class. The best teaching is well planned and skilfully managed so that learning is sharply focused and can be quickly redirected when feedback from pupils, either from answering questions or working independently, shows that they can move on more quickly or that key concepts need revisiting. The 'five-minute plan' ensures consistency in the approach to planning teaching, but weaker teachers do not use the format to set ambitious outcomes or to pitch activities at the right level, together with suitable tasks and resources. In some lessons, the quality of teachers' exposition is simply not good enough. Time is wasted because pupils are unclear what they need to do, or what to do next when they finish their work. Too often, the pace of learning is slowed by laborious or repetitive tasks, particularly when teachers do not have ways to check pupils' understanding. In too many lessons, the quality of learning is affected by pupils' recalcitrant attitudes, and teachers have to work hard to elicit any response, or simply spend too much time supervising uncooperative pupils instead of having time to extend those who are keen to learn.

Reasonable progress is being made in two of the key priorities from the last inspection: marking has improved considerably and teaching assistants are more effectively deployed. Although not all teachers are applying the academy's marking policy, it is clear from talking to pupils and looking at their work that teachers' feedback comments are more constructive and helpful in identifying how to improve, and this is starting to raise pupils' expectations and strengthen their learning. Teaching assistants are working more efficiently because most teachers now share their lesson planning and specify the interventions and support required for individual pupils. Teaching assistants feel confident that they are having a greater impact on pupils' learning.

Other aspects of teaching, such as the use of questioning and pupils' presentation, are not improving quickly enough or have only recently been tackled. Some classrooms, for example, have exemplar material on display for pupils to model what is expected, but walls in other classrooms are starkly bare. Teachers who know their pupils well use their questioning cleverly to build understanding and stretch pupils,

but other teachers use a scattergun approach to questioning and too readily accept the first answer without using questions to engage the whole class. Peer assessment, where pupils evaluate each other's work to iron out misconceptions and exchange ideas, is effectively used in some lessons but not others.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils' behaviour was judged to require improvement at the last inspection. Since then, there has been a small but steady increase in attendance and a sharp decrease in the number of fixed-term exclusions. However, these figures mask the fact that pupils' behaviour in lessons has not improved sufficiently.

At the start of this term, the academy pointed to the significant decrease in the number of pupils removed from lessons as an indication that behaviour had improved. Since then, the figures have, once again, shown a marked increase. The academy claims this is evidence that its robust behaviour management is working effectively but inspection findings do not support this view. The number of pupils removed from lessons is unacceptably high, and reflects the reality that pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons are not nearly good enough. Pupils understand the stepped sanctions but say that these are not effective enough. Too many pupils are either sent into a neighbouring classroom or to the 'exit room', where they do little or no work. Of particular concern is the significant over-representation of disadvantaged pupils in the sanctions logs.

Although pupils are generally orderly, polite and considerate when moving around the academy and at break periods, leaders have not established a suitable climate for learning in classrooms. In too many lessons, teachers do not impose high enough expectations and pupils take the opportunity to chat across the classroom, sometimes making silly comments which disrupt the focus of the teacher and the work of other pupils. Disengagement or low-level disruption is the norm in too many lessons and, even when the whole class is compliant with the teacher's instructions, too many pupils do too little during the course of a whole lesson. Pupils' passive work habits are taking time to redress because too many pupils are accustomed to sitting quietly rather than working hard. Older pupils have not developed the essential self-confidence to express their opinions or ask questions, and they are not used to working collaboratively to draft ideas and refine their thinking. This is not the case in every lesson. Pupils are quick to say that they enjoy subjects such as art and physical education because they find these lessons enjoyable; in these, they work hard and learn a lot. Some teachers have good strategies for developing positive attitudes to learning. In GCSE history, for example, pupils are routinely expected to research answers, share ideas and present counter-arguments in order to extend their knowledge and understanding but also develop their wider speaking, listening and presentational skills, and their social confidence. When given the opportunity, for example as ambassadors, pupils readily take on responsibility and make a positive contribution to everyday life at their academy.

Attendance levels are rising gradually, with reductions in levels of persistent absenteeism. There has been an impressive improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, such that their overall attendance exceeds that of their peers.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Until recently, leadership has been dysfunctional, with too many senior managers assuming the same responsibilities and not holding staff to account for the effectiveness of their work. Academy leaders have made the right strategic decisions to bring about improvements, but restructuring the senior and middle leadership has had to take time. This has meant that leaders have had too little impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, or in strengthening pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The academy did not respond urgently enough to the findings of the inspection in January to improve the GCSE results in 2015. Only just over half of the teachers' predictions proved accurate. Low expectations and/or inaccurate assessments of the standard of pupils' work meant that support and intervention were not targeted appropriately, and too many pupils underachieved. Disadvantaged pupils fared particularly poorly, indicating that support provided through the pupil premium funding was largely ineffective for this cohort. Senior and middle leaders have not established a positive climate for learning across the academy, and another cohort of pupils will underachieve unless the recent leadership changes bring about dramatic improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning.

Since September, the Principal has communicated higher expectations of staff and established clearer lines of accountability. Procedures for monitoring the academy's provision have been strengthened. Learning walks and lesson observations are suitably focused on both 'compliance' and 'excellence', and scrutinies of pupils' work sensibly evaluate the quality of pupils' learning rather than merely checking teachers' compliance with marking expectations. Importantly, subject leaders are involved in this monitoring. They have been well trained, and are now in a position to use their evaluations to target support and improve teaching. However, strategies for improving key elements of teaching and learning, such as 'pupil talk', are either only recently introduced or are at the planning stage.

In the past, the academy has had plenty of management information, but has not always analysed it forensically or used it effectively to plan support or drive improvement. One exception is attendance data, which are used effectively to monitor pupils' absence and quickly intervene to support better attendance. Information about pupils' behaviour and progress is not used well enough. Senior managers could give inspectors a detailed breakdown of the pupil groups subject to behaviour sanctions since the start of term, but this information has not been used to improve the behaviour of key groups. The academy's new assessment system is an excellent tool that enables teachers to easily enter assessment information, and

leaders to interrogate the data at the press of a button. However, it is too early to see whether teachers' assessments are any more accurate than previously or whether the new approach has encouraged teachers to be more ambitious in their expectations.

The Principal has galvanised staff to implement necessary changes. There are common procedures for planning and marking, for example, which are promoting greater consistency. The decision to ban pupils' use of mobile phones, and the swift application of the new rule, has demonstrated the effectiveness of concerted and collaborative action. The introduction of other changes has been sensibly underpinned by 'microscripts', which spell out to staff what is expected. Positive steps include teachers 'meeting and greeting' pupils to ensure an orderly start to lessons, and teachers giving precedence to the work of disadvantaged pupils when checking pupils' work.

The Progress Board is kept up to date and is effectively held to account by the IEB. Both boards know that the academy got off to a slow start, but they are confident that it has now turned a corner and is improving rapidly. Inspectors are much more circumspect about recent improvements, particularly in the light of last summer's results and the limited evidence of impact in the classroom.

### **External support**

The academy draws on good support and guidance from a range of external sources, although most is provided through the Ormiston Academy Trust and its teaching school. The sponsor is meeting the commitments set out in its statement of action, and provides clear guidance and high-quality training. However, this has yet to impact sufficiently on the two key priorities that need to improve, namely teaching and behaviour.

The academy should:

- agree with all staff the standard of pupils' behaviour and the attitudes to learning that they will expect and implement in every lesson
- raise teachers' expectations about the quality and quantity of work that pupils will complete in their lessons.