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4 January 201

Mr Craig D'Cunha
Principal
Chantry Academy
Mallard Way
Ipswich
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Dear Mr D'Cunha

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chantry Academy

Following my visit with Cathy Tooze, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 7–8 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 third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action 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 and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk County Council.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lawrence
Ofsted Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly of the most able pupils, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of how much pupils can achieve, how well they should present their work and their standards of behaviour, especially in mathematics
 - focusing more closely on helping pupils to acquire and use the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, and ensuring that these skills are taught in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - marking pupils' work in such a way that they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve it.

- Revise the curriculum in order to:
 - ensure there is sufficient time allocated for the core subjects of English and mathematics
 - provide a curriculum that builds upon pupils' prior knowledge and skills, especially in Key Stage 4.

- Improve the behaviour and attendance of pupils by:
 - eradicating poor behaviour in lessons to ensure that pupils' opportunities to learn are not compromised through noisy and persistent disruption
 - all staff challenging poor behaviour around the academy and dealing with it according to the academy's agreed procedures
 - developing systems to encourage good attendance.

- Revise the performance management programme within the academy to ensure that all teachers have clear targets that relate to the success of their pupils so that they can be held to account for their pupils' achievement.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing robust systems for reviewing and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to provide leaders with a clear and accurate picture of the academy's effectiveness
 - using the results of these evaluations to draw up sharply focused plans for improvement.

- Communicate more effectively with parents and take action to restore their confidence in the academy.

- Make more effective use of the pupil premium funds to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of governance, including 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 third monitoring inspection on 7–8 December 2015.

Evidence

During the inspection, inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised academy documents and met with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a member of the academy's parent forum and a representative of the sponsoring trust. Inspectors checked the academy's single central record of staff.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the academy has changed its name from Suffolk New Academy to Chantry Academy. It has moved to new premises on the existing academy site. The Active Learning Trust has formally taken over the sponsorship of the academy. One senior leader, the head of mathematics and nine other teaching staff have left the academy. A local governing body has been appointed. The number of pupils on the academy's roll has increased.

Outcomes for pupils

The proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining at least five GCSEs at C grade or above including English and mathematics in the 2015 examinations improved sharply from 24% in 2014 to 45%. This represents attainment which is now above the government's floor standard for this measure. Attainment in English and in mathematics both increased; this improvement was particularly notable in mathematics. These results were in line with what had been predicted by the academy.

The progress that pupils made on average across the range of their Key Stage 4 qualifications did not improve. The progress made by girls was greater than that made by boys. Pupils who were educated through off-site provision performed particularly poorly.

Academy leaders' assessment of current standards of achievement at Key Stage 4 suggest that while attainment in 2016 is likely to be similar to that in 2015, this will represent greater progress for pupils given their starting points. These projections are on a secure footing as teachers' assessment data is being rigorously validated through internal testing and the external moderation of work.

Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken by inspectors confirm that overall standards are rising. However, progress is too variable between and within subjects and also between different year groups. For example, current progress in Years 7 and 8 is more rapid than in Year 10. The progress of the most-able pupils is accelerating but the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged

pupils and their peers is not narrowing rapidly enough. Senior leaders have rightly identified that boys who join the academy with attainment which is in line with the national average do not achieve as well as other pupils, and they are developing a range of sensible strategies to improve their progress.

The academy has recently introduced a new assessment system at Key Stage 3. This has been designed to enable academy leaders to track and evaluate the progress made by pupils in the lower school effectively. However, because this system is so new teachers are not using it consistently and it currently provides an overoptimistic view of the amount of progress that is being made in these year groups.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching is improving, but it remains inconsistent in its effectiveness between and within departments. There is still a small amount of inadequate teaching and too much that requires improvement. Improved outcomes in mathematics demonstrate that the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved.

The revised curriculum approach adopted by the academy, in which pupils across the whole academy learn through tasks which match the style and standard of GCSE assessments, has successfully raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in their lessons. Increasingly teachers are also successfully planning their lessons so that progress is accelerated accordingly, particularly for the most able. The range of GCSE-style questions selected encourages pupils to write in a variety of styles, including at length, and this is helping to develop pupils' literacy skills across all subjects. The academy has not yet adopted a successful approach to ensuring that pupils' numeracy skills are developed as effectively outside of mathematics lessons.

The overall quality of marking has continued to improve. The common feedback sheet which is now consistently used across different departments successfully encourages pupils to respond to their teachers' comments. Where teaching is most successful it is clear from pupils' work that they act on the advice given by teachers to improve the quality of their work. In these lessons pupils maintain high-quality presentation, which means that their work will provide an effective basis for future revision. However, systems are not consistently in place to identify where marking is less effective or even absent; as a result there are a small number of lessons where pupils' work does not demonstrate the same improvement over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The improvement in pupils' behaviour identified at the time of the last monitoring inspection has been maintained. The academy's monitoring information shows that incidents of poor behaviour are declining and pupils remain confident that bullying is rare and dealt with well by staff. Overall attendance continues to increase and is

now in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has not fallen at the same rate. It continues to be greater than the national average and improving this situation must be a high priority for the academy.

Pupils generally treat staff and each other with respect and courtesy. As a result conduct outside of lessons is usually calm and orderly. Teachers are now applying the academy's 'consequences' behaviour policy consistently within lessons; inspectors observed pupils responding quickly to improve their behaviour when the policy needed to be referred to in the classroom. However, pupils are not routinely demonstrating more constructive attitudes to their own learning. They are still too reliant upon what is provided by their teachers and they have not developed the range of skills which would allow them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The move to the new academy buildings has greatly enhanced pupil conduct. Pupils greatly appreciate their new environment and treat it with care. This contributes to the positive atmosphere around the site. Pupils are looking forward even more to the provision of improved outside space when all building work is complete. The scale and design of the new building has allowed improved staff supervision throughout the academy day.

The academy's safeguarding practice is effective. When concerns are raised, for example by parents, senior leaders work appropriately with external agencies in order to ensure the well-being of pupils.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels have ensured that reasonable progress has been made towards the academy's removal from special measures. The sense of optimism which followed the arrival of the Principal has been sustained since the last monitoring inspection. Staff are entirely supportive of the changes he has instigated.

Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching are increasingly robust. The evaluation of teaching quality sensibly draws upon a range of sources of evidence, including progress data, lesson observations and work scrutiny. Senior leaders' evaluation of the overall quality of teaching is still, however, overoptimistic as it draws upon pupil progress data which is not yet consistently reliable for all year groups. Academy leaders plan comprehensive training opportunities for staff and mechanisms for all teachers to learn from the strongest teaching practice in the academy.

Heads of year now closely monitor achievement in their year groups and oversee interventions where appropriate to accelerate progress. All middle leaders now routinely evaluate the effectiveness of their teams and plan how they can contribute

to whole-school priorities. This has strengthened middle leadership at the academy. However, middle leadership is not so consistently effective amongst some heads of subject departments.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium funding has been undertaken since the last monitoring inspection. The conclusions from this review have helped the academy to improve its provision for disadvantaged pupils. However, senior leaders have not yet carefully evaluated the impact of this funding on pupil outcomes with sufficient precision.

The academy has continued to focus on improving communication with parents and enhancing the reputation of the academy within the community. The parent forum which meets every half term has contributed practically to a number of developments at the academy, including the redesign of the academy website and the strengthening of the academy's procedures for setting and communicating homework. An increase in pupil numbers is strong evidence of the academy's improving reputation in the local community.

The members of the newly-appointed governing body are committed to providing the necessary levels of support and challenge to the senior team. They have started their roles with enthusiasm and have recently undertaken some relevant training to help them evaluate information about pupil progress. They are conscious that they are inexperienced as a team and that their effectiveness is as yet unproven. However, evidence in the written record of their initial meetings shows that they are already aware of many of the key priorities for the academy. Governors have not yet planned a systematic programme for the adoption and review of new policies.

External support

The Active Learning Trust continues to provide effective support for the academy. The Principal benefits from membership of a network of local trust headteachers which shares good practice. The trust is enhancing teaching, learning and assessment through facilitating the academy's collaboration with a partner secondary academy, particularly in confirming standards at Key Stage 4 through the moderation of pupils' work. The trust is currently working on a project to ensure effective transition to the academy for pupils from local primary schools. It has also provided consultancy on behaviour, attendance and the development of middle leadership which have contributed to improvements in these areas.