

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Robert Spendlow  
Principal  
John Whitgift Academy  
Crosland Road  
Grimsby  
Lincolnshire  
DN37 9EH

Dear Mr Spendlow

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of John Whitgift Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection. Thank you also for allowing Deano Wright HMI to shadow the inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in May 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the principal, members of the governing body and representatives of the trust. The trust's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated. I conducted three tours of the school to observe learning in progress, two of which were done jointly with members of the senior leadership team. I met with a group of pupils, a group of staff and a number of middle leaders.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection there have been several new appointments at senior leadership level to join the newly appointed principal. These appointments include senior leaders for mathematics, English and science. New appointments have been made to history and life, physics and technology and engineering. The school is fully staffed.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The principal is the lynchpin to John Whitgift Academy improving and the pupils making better progress than in the past. He is focused, determined and does not accept second best. He is fully aware of all the strengths and weaknesses and is systematically tackling the issues and building on the strengths in the school. Governors are fully informed about the changes which are put in place and the impact of them through regular meetings. At these meetings with governors, members of staff are required to present the evidence they have for the progress that pupils are making. This means that governors are more aware of the impact of actions taken and are holding members of staff directly to account.

Senior leadership team meetings now include middle leaders. This means that both senior and middle leaders are fully aware of what needs doing next and how they are going to do it. These meetings also mean middle leaders are working alongside their peers and having the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of what works and how pupils can make better progress. The subject directors from the trust also provide much appreciated support for the middle leaders. As a result, middle leaders are more confident in their roles.

Much work has been done to make sure the assessment information is accurate. The trust has provided effective support to do this. Assessments are moderated across the trust to ensure that they are not overgenerous. Regular meetings, often attended by the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, mean that staff are held to account for the progress made by pupils. The assessment information shows that all groups of pupils are making better progress than they did last year, including boys and disadvantaged pupils.

Teaching in science and information communication technology is developing. Personalised training programmes for staff are ensuring that improvements in these areas are beginning to catch up with those in other areas of the curriculum. The most able scientists are being challenged through lessons which ensure that they have to think and work hard on concepts which they might find difficult.

Training provided to improve the quality of teaching is appreciated. Feedback given to members of staff on their lessons is acted upon swiftly and support is put in place when required. As a result members of staff feel more confident to take risks in their lessons to enable the pupils to make better progress. Pupils are being challenged more in lessons; they have to think about their work and persevere when it is difficult, but they are capable of doing it. However, not all lessons consistently challenge pupils to this high level.

The focus, last term, on improving behaviour means that lessons are now very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. This means that learning is taking priority in lessons and pupils are making more progress. However, there is a very small number of staff who do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. The

attendance of pupils dipped this academic year. The school has put in place a number of strategies to improve attendance but it is too early to judge the impact of these.

The review of pupil premium spending was undertaken swiftly. This review highlighted a number of weaknesses. These were acted upon rapidly. As a result, the pupil premium money is now allocated according to each individual pupil's need. The spending of the money and the impact of it is monitored closely. Consequently the gaps between the progress made by pupils supported by the pupil premium money and their peers nationally is reducing across the school. The spending of the Year 7 catch-up money was also reviewed. The focus is now on developing the pupils' literacy skills, both in lessons and in bespoke intervention sessions. Key words are targeted in lessons and pupils are encouraged to use them as appropriate. Pupils are also writing more extended pieces of work across subjects, a requirement of many of the GCSE courses that they are following.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Stuart  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**