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27 November 2009

Ms Jane Fletcher
Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich
Homestall Road
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Dear Ms Fletcher

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when we inspected your school on 26 November 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. The inspection team would also like to convey their thanks to staff and students for their help during the inspection.

The academy has made a new appointment of Vice Principal for the sixth form in September 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 12-13 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching and learning within lessons across the academy, so that specific learning interventions can be more sharply focused on those needing them most and out-of-hours and additional provision can become less vital to raising standards.
- Refine the curriculum at Key Stage 3 so that it better supports higher attainment.
- Improve the sixth form curriculum offer significantly and the links made with other local post-16 providers and partnerships.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

good progress in making improvements.

and



good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Grades awarded for teaching, learning and progress by inspectors were broadly in line with the academy's own assessment of its quality of lessons. The academy has reduced the proportion of inadequate teaching although leaders recognise that there is still more work to be done to reduce the proportion of satisfactory teaching. In the better lessons, teachers used a variety of teaching techniques, demonstrated good subject knowledge and lessons progressed at a good pace. In these lessons, inspectors observed the good use of self-assessment by students and good examples of marked work where students were given precise steps of what they needed to do to improve their performance. In satisfactory lessons teachers do not plan well to match the differing ranges of abilities within their class and provide support and intervention to those who need them most. In a few lessons teachers talked for too long, so inhibiting students' ability to work independently. Assessment of students' learning is not precise enough to enable teachers to know how well they are progressing. In these lessons, marking of students' work is not sufficiently thorough to enable students to know how to improve their work. Assessment data is available to teachers and they have an understanding of the National Curriculum levels that students are working at and towards. However, the data are not being used well enough to provide focused support to move some students on at an appropriate rate in all lessons.

Students are proud of the curriculum changes that have taken place in Key Stages 3 and 4, these changes are having a positive impact on students' attainment. There is an increased emphasis on English, mathematics and science with more time being allocated to each subject to improve students' achievement. The timetables for Mondays have been revised, to enable students to complete course work more efficiently. The 'learning to learn' programme for Year 7 students is now embedded and is enabling students to develop better learning skills. Most students take part in extra-curricular activities which include sports, academic or social options. The specialist status curriculum is well appreciated by students and is having a positive impact on the ethos within the school.

The academy continues to revise its curriculum for its sixth form students and there has been significant improvement. The sixth form is small although the number of students on courses this year has improved and is set to improve further in 2009/10. The curriculum is appropriate, containing an effective mix of level two and three courses. The academy is now part of the Harris Academy federated sixth form provision and is working closely with the Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich which is set to open in September 2010. Planning is well underway to provide a good breadth of courses to suit students' diverse needs and abilities. The new Vice Principal for the sixth form has put many good measures in place that have brought about improvement, particularly in attendance and attainment. The new academic target-setting, assessment, recording and monitoring systems have enabled the academy to undertake closer scrutiny of students' levels of performance so that targeted

support is implemented more swiftly. As a result of these combined actions the academy is predicting a rise in the proportion of students set to achieve grades A-C at A level. These improved outcomes can also be attributed to the effective partnership work with a high performing academy within the federation. The academy continues to establish effective partnerships and work is underway for a federation post-16 conference involving 500 teachers to enable good practice to be shared within the sector.

As a result of many good actions by the school, students' attainment in 2009 improved on the previous year. Students' attainment of five A*-C at GCSE improved considerably on the previous year, as did the proportion of students achieving five A*-G. Although the proportion of students who attained five A*-C including English and mathematics surpassed the school's own target, the results demonstrated a decline on the previous year's performance. The academy reports that the majority of students met or exceeded their challenging targets, resulting in students making good progress in 2009. In the lessons observed by inspectors, students' made progress that was at least satisfactory and on many occasions good. The quality of students' learning in sport subjects is good.

Standards in the sixth form have also improved. The number of students undertaking A level programmes in Year 13 in 2009 was small. All students achieved a grade; however no students achieved the higher grades of A-B, although just over a third achieved a grade C. The school's own data indicate that students made good progress from their low starting points. Current data indicate that the academy is on track to significantly improve on its previous year's performance.

The academy achieved the majority of its specialist targets with the exception of applied health and social care, which is now no longer being offered to students.

Self-evaluation has been thorough and identifies the key priorities to move the academy forward, especially in teaching. Consequently, effective actions have been taken to improve the quality of teaching. The school improvement partner works closely with the school and evaluates the school's performance well.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

