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4 December 2014

Mr Adam Daly
Principal
Crawshaw Academy
Robin Lane
Pudsey
West Yorkshire
LS28 9HU

Dear Mr Daly

Special measures monitoring inspection of Crawshaw Academy

Following my visit with Janet Pruchniewicz, Additional Inspector and Alan Parkinson, Additional Inspector to your academy on 2 and 3 December 2014, 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 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:
The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers but I would strongly recommend that that no more than one is appointed per subject department.

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 and the Chair of the Trust.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, so it is at least consistently good and enables students to make good or better progress in English, mathematics and science, by ensuring all teachers:
 - take into account the varying needs and abilities of students to set work that is well matched to their capabilities, particularly to challenge the most able
 - ensure all students, especially boys, are engaged in their learning and encouraged to answer questions more often to show they understand what they are being taught
 - mark students' books regularly in order to provide them with the information and advice they need about how to improve their work and by insisting students act upon this
 - check carefully students' understanding, especially the boys, of what they are learning by asking searching questions and swiftly reviewing their work during lessons
 - support the development of English skills by insisting on high-quality presentation of students' work, especially their written work and ensure spelling is always accurate give students more opportunities in mathematics to work things out for themselves and extend their understanding.

- Improve students' behaviour, safety and attendance, as well as reduce the number of students who are excluded by:
 - rapidly reducing students' absenteeism, particularly that of pupils supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs
 - making sure all students arrive at school on time
 - making sure disrespectful behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff both inside and outside the classroom
 - developing the confidence of those very few vulnerable students who say they feel unable to socialise at breaks and lunchtimes.

- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership, management and governance by:

- appointing as soon as possible permanent key senior leaders and headteacher
- ensuring leaders at all levels, including governors, focus relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning and standards of student behaviour
- eradicating the inadequate teaching that exists and improving that which requires improvement so teaching is at least good
- ensuring subject leaders take the information about students' progress fully into account when assessing the impact of teaching in their areas of responsibility
- ensuring the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve achievement, behaviour and attendance of those students supported by the funding
- checking rigorously on the quality of teaching and students' achievement in the sixth form
- ensuring governors hold the school to account effectively for ensuring the quality of teaching, students' achievement, and behaviour and attendance improve quickly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 December 2014.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, other senior and middle leaders, a group of staff and three groups of students. An inspector met with the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Education from the Interserve Academies Trust (IAT) and the National Leader of Education (NLE) who is working with the academy as part of a package of support for the academy's improvement delivered by the Red Kite Teaching School Alliance.

Context

There have been significant contextual changes since the previous monitoring inspection. Crawshaw School, a convertor academy, became Crawshaw Academy, sponsored by IAT, on the 1 September 2014. Crawshaw Academy is the first member of the IAT. In June 2014, an interim headteacher was appointed and the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher returned to their substantive posts. The interim headteacher was appointed as the substantive Principal of the academy in October. One assistant headteacher retired at the end of the summer term and a further three teachers have left. Six teachers have moved from full-time to part-time contracts. Three new teachers have joined the academy, two on temporary contracts. There have been a few minor changes to middle leadership responsibility posts. New governance arrangements have been put in place since September 2014. At a local level this comprises a Leeds Governing Board, a Local Advisory Body and a Task and Monitoring Group. The Local Advisory Body has yet to meet this term. The Red Kite Teaching School Alliance has been contracted by IAT to provide school improvement for the academy.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Unvalidated results at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014 presented a mixed picture of improvement and overall academy leaders were disappointed. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, fell compared to 2013. While, in part, this is attributable to changes in how this measure was calculated in 2014, there were also a significant number of students who underachieved due to poor attendance and/or the impact of the courses and qualifications they studied. In GCSE English, there were some successes in narrowing gaps in performance between boys and girls and also between disadvantaged students and their peers. This was not the case in GCSE mathematics. More pleasing Key Stage 4 outcomes were achieved in a number of other subjects including, physical education, French, information and communication technology, business studies and health and social care.

In the sixth form, achievement on A2 courses improved, but underperformance in Year 12, at AS level, remains a concern in some subjects. Outcomes for students studying vocational qualifications in both Years 12 and 13 are typically more positive.

At Key Stage 3, much work has been done to ensure that data used to track students' progress is accurate, particularly, in light of changes to the National Curriculum and the removal of assessment levels. Staff have a greater awareness of the progress needed each year if students are to achieve well at the end of Year 11, and this is being used to ensure targets set are sufficiently challenging. Intervention is in place to help students who do not arrive at the academy with the reading, writing or mathematical skills needed to succeed and there are early signs that these interventions are having a positive impact on accelerating students' progress. The use of pupil premium funding is being targeted more carefully and its impact checked more thoroughly.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching in the academy is improving in all key stages. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and assessment data confirm that learning and progress are getting better. Professional development opportunities for teachers are wide ranging, carefully matched to individual need and valued. Teachers who talked with inspectors detailed how their practice had been successfully improved. They appreciate the time they are being given to talk with other members of their department about how training can be used to improve their teaching and the increased opportunities to observe good and outstanding practitioners in other schools. Information about students' current attainment is increasingly being used to plan learning. As a result, teaching is better matched to the needs of different groups of students providing them with a more appropriate degree of challenge. Much work has been done to improve the quality of marking and feedback provided to students. Students' books show that marking is more regular and that teachers are increasingly providing feedback that enables them to know how to improve. However, there is still more to be done to develop the quality of feedback and increase the consistency and quality of students' response to it.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Effective action is leading to improvements in attendance for all groups of students, including those that are disadvantaged and boys. The number of students who are persistent absentees is reducing. The focus on punctuality at the start of the academy day has been maintained and 'late arrivals' are becoming less frequent. Incidents of fixed-term exclusions continue to decline over time, reflecting the improved management of behaviour and more positive students' attitudes. Students and staff who spoke with inspectors feel that behaviour around the academy is much better. In lessons, students' engagement in learning is steadily improving, including that of boys, because teachers are planning and teaching in a way that expects and encourages their participation. Routines to ensure students have the equipment

needed to be ready for learning are much more embedded than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. Policies to manage behaviour in lessons are being applied more consistently, but some students reported that their peers still sometimes choose to behave less well, particularly when they have a supply teacher.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The new Principal has quickly gained the commitment of staff and students to work together to improve the academy. As one Year 11 student noted, 'it feels like they (staff) are there for us'. Teachers reported feeling empowered and were confident that they are being led in the right direction. There are higher expectations of what students can achieve. While improvements continued under the temporary leadership arrangements in place at the time of last monitoring inspection, the pace has quickened from June. This is as a result of the increased senior leadership capacity provided by interim headteacher, now Principal, the finalisation of the sponsorship arrangements and the impact of external support.

Improved systems, for example, to monitor behaviour or track students' progress are enabling both senior and middle leaders to work in a more efficient and effective way. The academy's action plan has been re-written and improved. Success criteria are now clearly identified and timescales for checks on the implementation and impact of actions are included. Monitoring and evaluation of the academy's performance is more frequent and robust. For example, the use of a broader range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching is providing an increasingly accurate picture of the extent of improvement in practice that has been secured.

Middle leaders are becoming more confident in leading improvements in their subject areas. Expectations for their role have been made clear and they have benefitted from leadership training and, in some instances, one-to-one external support. They are more confident in the use of students' assessment information to identify and tackle underperformance and have more time to share good practice within their teams to improve teaching.

Academy leaders know the current curriculum is not 'fit for purpose' and some sensible short-term adjustments have been taken in an attempt to improve achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. A new curriculum model will be in place from September in 2015 for both Key Stages 3 and 4 to better meet students' needs and aspirations. Sixth form teaching is delivered through a confederation of three local schools. A similar curricular review is underway to improve the quality of teaching and achievement.

Although there has been significant change in the academy's governance arrangements since the last monitoring inspection, the focus on monitoring its progress and the provision of challenge and support for senior leaders has been sustained. The previous governing body worked closely with the proposed sponsor

and the Red Kite Teaching School Alliance in the summer term to increase leadership capacity and ensure a smooth transition to becoming a sponsored academy. The current involvement of some members of the previous governing body on the Leeds Governing Board and the Task and Monitoring Group has helpfully provided continuity and contextual knowledge. The Task and Monitoring Group meets frequently ensuring the academy's progress in relation to the areas for improvement identified is closely monitored. The 'impact' papers to inform discussions provide a broad range of data and other evidence on which to evaluate the academy's progress. While the Principal identifies that these meetings are challenging, the minutes do not reflect this is the case.

External support

A wide range of external support is being effectively used to enable the academy's areas for improvement to be tackled quickly. Sources of support are carefully chosen to meet the most urgent priorities. The quality and value of external support is checked, and adjusted if necessary, to ensure maximum impact. The NLE has provided valuable expertise, including peer support for the new Principal. Improvement activity delivered through the Red Kite Teaching School Alliance has already had a marked impact on key areas of the academy's work. For example, a Specialist Leader in Education has worked closely with the English department to improve leadership, teaching and assessment. Inspection evidence, along with students' outcomes and their views all confirm that considerable improvements in English have already been secured. Similarly, teachers who have been involved in Red Kite 'Improving Teacher Programme' talk with enthusiasm about the difference it has made to their skills and confidence. Work to support development in other subjects, such as, mathematics and science, delivered through Red Kite or other partners, and is at a much earlier stage.

The Trust has been effective in ensuring that the academy can access the support it needs to improve. Since September, it has worked quickly to appoint a substantive Principal for the academy and is gradually developing the necessary capacity to provide the strategic and 'back office' support typically found in established multi academy trusts. The Trust has established robust governance arrangements by ensuring members selected are equipped with the necessary skills, experience and expertise to govern well. There is a growing recognition that in the short term, the Trust's vision for the academy, its students and the community needs to be carefully balanced with tackling the most urgent improvement priorities.