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2 July 2015

Mrs Angela Hull  
Headteacher  
Outwood Academy Foxhills  
Foxhills Road  
Scunthorpe  
Lincolnshire  
DN15 8LJ

Dear Mrs Hull

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Outwood Academy Foxhills**

Following my visit with Mary Lanovy-Taylor and Lynne Selkirk, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 30 and 1 July 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 fifth 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.

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 for People for North Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve teaching to good or better by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching
  - raising teachers' expectations as to what students can achieve
  - planning lessons which ensure that students of all abilities make more rapid progress and achieve highly
  - improving marking and the advice given to all students, so that they know what they have done well, are shown how to improve their work and by making sure that teachers check that these improvements have been made.
  
- Raise attainment and ensure that all groups of students make good progress in all subjects by:
  - improving the standards of students' reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills
  - improving students' attitudes to learning and ensuring that they work hard and quickly in every lesson and take care over the presentation of their work
  - challenging students, particularly the most able, in every lesson, so that they are encouraged to think for themselves and to produce work of a high quality
  - keeping careful checks on the progress of all individuals and groups who are not making the progress they should and by providing the help they need to catch up in their work.
  
- Make sure that leadership and governance are effective by:
  - taking actions to ensure that all senior and subject leaders develop the skills necessary to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress
  - establishing secure arrangements so that governors can hold senior and subject leaders to account for the impact of their work
  - taking the necessary actions so that the range of subjects and courses provided, particularly at Key Stage 4, successfully prepare students for future study, training and employment
  - ensuring efficient management of the academy's finances so that its accommodation is fit for purpose and staff and resources are used to best effect in driving up standards
  - undertaking an external review of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 30 to 1 July 2015.**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work and met with the Principal, the Executive Principal and the Executive Principal Designate. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of students and three governors. Discussions were held with a small group of parents following the Year 8 graduation ceremony. The inspection team observed a number of lessons and some of these visits to classrooms were carried out jointly with middle leaders. In addition, several learning walks were conducted. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including a range of exercise books to evaluate the quality of marking, feedback and progress.

### **Context**

One teacher of English has left the academy since the last monitoring visit and has been replaced by a new teacher of English.

### **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

A great deal of hard work and effort has been spent in trying to ensure that current Year 11 students do as well as they possibly can in their examinations. Additional lessons at weekends and during the half-term holiday have taken place and been generally well attended. Much of the focus has been on trying to plug significant gaps in students' knowledge and understanding due to poor quality teaching over a longer period of time. Alongside this, leaders carefully and closely check the progress individual students are making and provide timely intervention.

Current data show that these efforts are having success and attainment and progress are rising. The academy predicts that the proportion of students achieving five A\*-C grades, including English and mathematics, at GCSE is set to rise and gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers expected to narrow. The proportion of A\*-A grades is also expected to increase, albeit from a low starting point. However, those students on alternative learning provision are not expected to achieve as well.

Year 10 data indicate that students are making better progress compared with similar aged students at the same point last year. Leaders are well aware that students do not perform equally well across the curriculum and further work is needed to iron out these inconsistencies.

Younger students are improving their reading skills and there are opportunities for students to develop their extended writing skills. More needs to be done to encourage older students to develop their reading habits and make better use of the library. Numeracy support has been most effective in improving the rates of progress

for low and middle attaining students. Current Year 7 data suggest that stronger progress is being made in English and science.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching continues to show signs of improvement. An increasing number of teachers are developing their questioning skills to check that students have understood what has been explained or to challenge them to think more deeply. The approach to planning is now consistent and well embedded. Older students in particular have noted the improvements and say that teachers have higher expectations of them. Consequently, attitudes to learning are improving but do not always translate into well-presented work.

Leaders recognise that there is still more to do. Teachers sometimes slavishly follow their lesson plans and this can lead to students not having enough time to complete the tasks set nor allow them to show what they have learnt. Assessment information is not used consistently enough to challenge different groups of students, including the most able. Inspectors agree with parental comments, that homework is neither frequent nor challenging enough.

The majority of teachers comply with academy expectations and mark students' work regularly and provide suggestions for improvement and next steps, including the need to improve the presentation of work at times. However, the extent to which students respond to these comments and actually make the improvements is too hit and miss. This leads to some teachers making the same comments over and over again to no real effect.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students confirm that behaviour in lessons has significantly improved. There are fewer distractions in lessons and this helps students focus and concentrate on what is being taught. The academy's 'consequence' system is helping to tackle low-level disruptions and lessons are increasingly more interesting and engaging.

Students' attendance and punctuality are improving. Leaders are increasingly proactive in tackling absence. Displays around the academy, stress the importance of good attendance and prompt phone calls home when there is absence, coupled with regular reminders and the use of rewards, are having a positive impact.

The attendance of some students, however, is not as strong. Further work is needed to make sure girls, disadvantaged students and those who have English as an additional language improve their attendance. During this academic year fixed-term exclusions have shown some signs of reducing but they still remain too high and more work is needed to make sure that these reduce further.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the academy**

Senior leaders continue to effectively support and develop subject leaders. Subject leaders are continuing to benefit from working alongside Directors, who are experienced in effectively preparing older students for assessments and examinations. This is helping to build both capacity and confidence. Subject leaders are realistic about the progress that still needs to be made and have rightly identified the need to improve the achievement of younger students and to make sure that challenging regular and high quality homework is set and completed.

Regular monitoring is now embedded across the academy. For example, following meetings between senior and subject leaders, there are sometimes clear and precise actions that are agreed and it is clear who will do this work and by when. Systems are in place to regularly review the quality of teaching, marking and feedback.

However, there is a need to sharpen up some of this work so that it has a greater impact on students' progress. Checks on marking and feedback do not always bring about the necessary improvements and this slows students' progress. Lesson observations do not always focus enough on the progress students are making nor do they always show how and when weaknesses observed will be successfully tackled.

Governors continue to develop their skills in checking and challenging leaders when necessary, the work of the academy. For instance, they are willing to question and check whether data that is being presented to them is reliable and accurate. They visit the academy regularly to see for themselves the progress being made. Governors understand how additional funding for disadvantaged students is being spent and the impact this is having. There are fewer regular checks made on the impact of Year 7 catch-up funding.

### **External support**

The Outwood Grange Academy Trust continues to provide effective support. Subject leaders and Directors feel jointly responsible and accountable for making sure that achievement improves. Continued professional development and training opportunities are helping to develop the skills of both teachers and leaders.