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Ms V Swaida
Principal
Weavers Academy
Brickhill Road
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Dear Ms Swaida

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weavers Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 8 March 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help that you gave me and for the time that you made available to discuss the actions that you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the multi-academy trust are continuing to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the executive principal, who is also a representative of the trust, and the interim associate principal and other senior leaders, including the vice principal responsible for teaching and learning and the head of sixth form. I talked to a range of middle leaders and had a discussion with two experienced teachers. I met with two different groups of pupils representing all different year groups and talked to them about their learning and the progress

made by the academy. I considered a range of documentation provided by the academy.

Main findings

It is 'cool' to do well at your academy. Pupils are enjoying their learning and are proud of their achievements. A sense of self-belief and determination pervades staff and pupil groups alike.

Pupils say that they are well supported in their work. They are particularly appreciative of the new marking and assessment processes, which are now more consistently applied across the academy. Through these processes, individual pupils engage with their teachers to remedy misunderstandings and errors and to develop their learning further. Pupils told me that they really look forward to reading and responding to their teachers' comments on their work and they enjoy the dialogue that they have about it with their teachers. They work hard in lessons and are courteous around the school. Year 11 pupils indicated that they feel that they have adjusted to working hard, and that their teachers are offering them valuable help, such as study days at half term. As a result of these changes, the quality of learning across the academy as a whole is improving, and pupils are making better progress.

Staff feel energised and enthusiastic about their work. Senior leaders have implemented strong processes to support all teachers to improve their teaching and to hold them to account. Teachers at all levels understand that they are accountable for the progress and learning of their pupils and acknowledge that they are very well supported to develop their expertise. Middle leaders are taking leadership roles to drive different improvements, and there is a palpable excitement about what they could achieve. The quality of teaching is improving.

Since my last visit, you and your staff have worked hard to develop strategies to help pupils to develop their literacy skills. It is early days, and so it is not clear what the impact of the different initiatives that you plan will be, but the initial signs are encouraging.

You have sensibly reduced the size of the sixth form and ensured that learners are well matched to their courses. All those who started in the sixth form in Year 12 have remained on their courses. An increased proportion of Year 13 has applied to university, so that around 90% of learners have received offers on the courses of their choice at universities.

External Support

The Creative Education Trust has continued to work effectively to ensure that the senior leadership team of the academy is both held to account, and empowered to drive significant improvements in the academy. Most of the leadership and coaching of staff is completed by you and your team. Where additional support is needed,

you have brought in a consultant whose work has been valued by those supported.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of the Creative Education Trust, and the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing

Her Majesty's Inspector