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7 May 2014

Mr Samson Olusanya  
Headteacher  
Christ's College Finchley  
East End Road  
East Finchley  
London  
N2 0SE

Dear Mr Olusanya

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Christ's College Finchley**

Following my visit to your academy on 6 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- ensure that governors work closely with senior and middle leaders to fully understand trends and patterns in data about students' achievement
- embed high quality teaching by giving more prominence to planning that stretches the most able students and focuses upon closing gaps in students' achievement.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and four members of the governing body, including the Chair, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan

was evaluated. I also scrutinised your new lesson observation form, minutes of meetings of the governing body and a sample of your department reviews. In addition, I met with a representative from the local authority and spoke by telephone with the consultant who is working with you. We visited a few lessons together, talked about students' work and watched their engagement in their learning.

## **Context**

You have appointed a new deputy headteacher, two new assistant headteachers and three new learning managers. You have restructured the roles and responsibilities of your senior leadership team. Several teachers are leaving at the end of the summer term.

## **Main findings**

Your review of roles and responsibilities of your senior leadership team is helping everyone understand what they are accountable for and why. They understand how their impact will be measured against the targets in your improvement plan.

The academy improvement plan is fit for purpose. The priorities for improvement from the recent section 5 inspection steer the plan and you recognise that the success criteria must test out the progress of different groups at the academy. You and your senior leaders are refining how you use your data to judge the rates of progress of different groups of students. Some of the success criteria in your improvement plan could include more quantifiable targets for student groups, using your increasingly focused data. More regular checkpoints are critical for you and your governors, as these will help you keep a close eye on the pace and impact of improvement.

Your senior leaders have a good understanding of the rates of progress expected of students who join the school with Level 5 and 6 from their primary school education. You recognise that not all of your middle leaders, teachers and support staff are fully conversant with using data to make sure that these most able students reach grades A and A\* in their GCSE courses. The department reviews are of varying quality and you are about to provide more guidance for middle leaders to help them write a concise, evaluative review to be shared with governors. Middle leaders are becoming more aware of the use and impact of the pupil premium funding to close gaps in students' achievement, but they have some way to go to distil this information into meaningful targets in department reviews and action plans. Leaders are keeping a sharp focus upon the progress and attainment of Black African and Black Caribbean students especially in Year 10 and 11 to quickly remedy previous underachievement.

There is a greater drive to make certain that all teachers fully understand how to use assessment data to plan lessons and check how well students are doing against the expectations for students' progress nationally. There is a good focus upon improving levels of challenge for students in lessons and making sure of the stretch for the most able students in lessons and in teaching over time. This is more successful in

some subjects such as English and mathematics than in science. In lessons, most students are engaging with their work but a few say that work is too easy. You and your leaders are supporting teachers through additional training and this is starting to increase the proportion of good teaching over time and across key stages. The new lesson observation form has useful tips for observers but must be used carefully. We discussed during my visit that findings from observations of teaching should be linked to scrutiny of students' work and data about students' achievement so that the quality of teaching overtime is not skewed by a list of lesson observation grades. You are confident that this is not the case and are intending to do further work with leaders so that they all assess teaching against the progress and attainment of all student groups.

Securing consistency of good teaching over time and high quality marking and feedback to students in all subjects is rightly the nucleus of your improvement work. We looked together at some examples of marking, which confirmed your judgement that while some is good, and students respond well to feedback to improve their work, other marking is poor. It lacks detail and impact because students do not respond to the comments, which are themselves lacking in challenge and are not requiring students to engage in critical or evaluative thinking.

The head of the sixth form is taking robust action to review the curriculum and link with other external partners such as Barnet College to make sure students choose the right courses for their ability and interests. There is a much sharper focus upon developing better teaching in the sixth form and the tackling of students' progress is getting better.

Your understanding of what constitutes good governance is improving and you and the Chair are aware of the key priorities for governance to become good in the next 18 months. Governors are much more aware of how pupil premium funding is spent, but have yet to tease out the actual impact on achievement over time for the students who benefit from this resource. Your governors have received training about analysing sixth form achievement data and are starting to become more familiar with comparing students' performance in Key Stage 3 and 4 with national benchmarks. They are asking questions about the quality of teaching and are challenging you and your senior leaders about staff pay and rewards. The minutes of meetings are reporting actions. However, they do not record well enough robust debate about the achievement of different groups and how well teaching is raising achievement. Governors are outward looking, committed and very keen to access further training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

You are working in partnership with three outstanding schools locally and several teachers are benefiting from the joining the Outstanding Teacher Programme. Your

shared training with these schools to support middle leaders and develop better teaching is continuing at pace. You recognise that the impact of this work to iron out inconsistencies at Christ's College has yet to be grounded firmly in practice but you are insistent about change so that all staff and students rise to higher expectations. You took swift action to secure more time for teaching English in Year 10 and 11. You are deploying an external consultant to work with you and your English team to offer additional support to students who are underachieving. The local authority is offering additional support for governors and this is about to commence through the governor services team this term.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Barnet, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Department for Education Academies Advisors Unit.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**