

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 January 2017

Mrs Bernie Addison
Principal
University Academy Keighley
Green Head Road
Utleigh
Keighley
West Yorkshire
BD20 6EB

Dear Mrs Addison

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of University Academy Keighley

Following my visit to your school on 12 January 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in April 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the sponsor. You accompanied me on a learning walk. I spoke informally with a range of pupils during the course of the day. Among a wide range of other documents, the school's statement of action and plans for improvement were evaluated.

Context

Following the previous inspection, and notification from the existing sponsor of its intention to withdraw from sponsoring the school, the school was supported by a local academy trust with a view to becoming the school's new sponsor. However, at the end of the autumn term 2016, this academy trust withdrew its interest in

becoming the school's sponsor. Since the previous inspection, there has been a managed staff reduction, involving both teaching and non-teaching staff. This was in preparation for the transfer of staff, under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) arrangements, to the new sponsor. As a consequence, a significant number of staff, including three senior leaders, left the school during the summer term. Since the principal took up post immediately prior to the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has reduced in number and has been restructured. A smaller number of new members of staff has been appointed since the summer. The school is fully staffed. The existing sponsor has reaffirmed its desire and readiness to continue as the school's sponsor. The chair of the governing body has taken up post very recently, for a short period of time only, following the retirement of his predecessor. Since he is not a member of the sponsor organisation, the sponsor is actively fielding an experienced governor with a view to taking on the role as chair of the governing body in the near future.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

- School leaders and governors have a firm understanding of the amount of work needed to tackle the areas for improvement. They fully accepted the key areas for improvement recorded in the section 5 report, published in June 2016. They have acted with urgency in taking the first steps to bring about improvement.
- Senior leaders have demonstrated a determination to address weaknesses in teaching in order to accelerate pupils' learning. They are supporting middle leaders to improve their impact and tackle weaknesses in teaching in their subjects.
- A well-considered monitoring and evaluation schedule helps middle leaders understand what is expected of them, so they can take steps to support and challenge teachers in their teams to improve teaching. The middle leaders I spoke with value this approach and the training they receive. As a result, they are clearer about their role in tackling areas for improvement.
- Linked to professional development, sharper monitoring is helping teachers to understand and make use of pupil progress information to plan their lessons to help pupils learn well and meet the challenging targets set by the school.
- The external pupil premium review was completed in the autumn term. Senior leaders and governors have used it to focus training for teachers, so that they can plan challenging learning with greater precision and so accelerate pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders monitor behaviour in lessons, to check that the clearer expectations of pupils are leading to fewer instances of low-level disruption. The pupils I spoke with are positive about their learning, and visits to lessons showed that pupils are willing to get on with their learning tasks. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is almost always good.
- The statement of action and improvement plans have an appropriate focus on

the key areas for improvement. However, some success criteria are not currently sharp or precise enough to readily enable governors and sponsors to offer high-quality challenge to senior leaders.

- You and the governors have strengthened arrangements for performance management. Processes for teachers' appraisal are clear and understood. Training for appraisers ensures that there is a firm focus on meeting teaching standards and on setting targets that are linked to pupils' progress. Senior leaders ensure that there is a clear, strong link between appraisal and teachers' professional development.
- Governors are keen to support and challenge senior leaders to bring about rapid improvement. They have re-focused their attention on improving the school's performance against the key areas for improvement since the withdrawal of interest in sponsoring the school of a local academy trust.
- Governors have a good grasp of the relative strengths and weaknesses of teaching and of pupils' progress. As a result, they are better able to challenge and support senior leaders.
- Governors are making use of the external review of governance report to sharpen their practices. They receive extensive information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They make sure they know how to interpret information to challenge senior leaders. Additional, experienced governors with specific skills in financial management and human resources have been identified to serve with effect from the spring term.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell
Ofsted Inspector