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Mrs B Addison
Principal
University Academy Keighley
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Dear Mrs Addison

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of University Academy Keighley

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 2017, 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 you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection that took place in April 2016. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

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

The school's improvement plan 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

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in April 2016.

- Urgently improve the progress of all pupils and raise attainment, especially in mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring high aspirations for pupils' achievement, through the rigorous implementation of the recently introduced tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and by setting challenging targets
 - taking action to close the gap in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is good or better across all subjects, including in the sixth form, and leads to improved outcomes by:
 - taking action to close the gap in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of work produced by pupils of all abilities and ensuring that learning proceeds at a good pace
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan for pupils' different starting points, and that planning is adjusted appropriately if they are not making at least good progress
 - improving the effectiveness of teachers' feedback across all subjects, so that all pupils know how to improve their work
 - eradicating pupils' off-task behaviour by providing them with more challenging work
 - sharing more effectively the best practice in teaching that exists in the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and governors so that they can secure rapid and sustained improvement to teaching and outcomes for pupils by:
 - using the information gathered from rigorous monitoring to identify where staff need extra training to improve their knowledge and skills, so that pupils make better progress
 - continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders, so that they are consistently using the information from monitoring to improve teaching, learning and assessment in their subjects
 - ensuring that performance management processes are rigorous
 - ensuring that members of the governing body receive accurate and comprehensive information about the performance.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9 May 2017

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the chair of the governing body, two other governors, who are representatives of the school's main and junior sponsors, and with other senior and middle leaders. The trust's statement of action and the school's updated improvement plan were evaluated. I observed teaching and learning during short visits to a small number of lessons and I observed pupils informally during breaktime. A sample of pupils' books was scrutinised. A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's records of pupils' progress, their attendance and the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe and safeguard them.

Context

At the time of the first monitoring visit, the governing body had only recently received confirmation that the school's main sponsor, the University of Bradford, would continue in its role. As a consequence, a new chair of the governing body has now taken up post, together with a number of other new governors. A small number of teaching staff have left the school and others have been appointed. Additional capacity has been put in place to support the financial and human resources management of the school. The principal was confirmed as the substantive post holder in March 2017. Leaders have established links with a wide range of external partners to provide training, support and expertise in addressing specific aspects of its improvement plan.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Together with governors and other senior leaders, you have set about addressing the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection with energy and commitment. Under your leadership, senior and middle leaders have developed greater clarity about their roles and responsibilities in pursuing actions to improve outcomes for pupils. As a result, they are motivated and determined to make a difference.

The schedule for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work to improve teaching, learning and assessment has been sharpened since the first monitoring inspection. You ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations you have of them and provide support and training to improve their practice. As a consequence, there is a continual dialogue between leaders at all levels that focuses on pupils' well-being and achievement.

You have sharpened the school's arrangements for performance management, so that targets have a proper focus on pupils' progress. They are linked to both professional development opportunities and salary progression that recognises staff

members' achievements.

Governors and sponsors have sharpened the ways in which they use information to check that improvements against the school's key priorities are being realised. They meet with you frequently to check progress against each element separately to form an accurate overview of improvement.

Governors are growing in their confidence and ability to interpret information on the progress pupils make. As such, they now focus their work more sharply on pupils than was the case at the first monitoring inspection. As a further consequence, governors are now much better placed to challenge and support you and your colleagues.

Governors are well informed and have a realistic view of the progress the school has made so far towards becoming a good school.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- You have strengthened leadership in the sixth form by sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. The clear expectation you have of sixth-form and subject leaders for professional dialogue about the quality of teaching and students' achievement is strengthening practice.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are benefiting from a more rigorous approach to recognising and addressing their needs. For example, the school has ensured that they have appropriate support to complete their examinations. Staff have the information they need about pupils' learning needs to plan lessons more effectively for these pupils. As a consequence, pupils are better supported and are beginning to improve their learning and achievement.
- Arrangements to ensure that checks on pupils' progress are robust and reliable have been strengthened. As a matter of course, all leaders of subject areas now carry out moderation exercises. Outcomes are scrutinised by senior staff, who provide appropriate challenge to middle leaders. In addition, you have developed opportunities for staff to work with other schools to provide an external verification of the school's view of pupils' achievement. This provides confidence in the reliability of assessment and enables senior and middle leaders to be more precise in addressing underperformance.
- The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe and safeguard them are effective. Pre-employment checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are carried out and recorded appropriately. Well-trained staff make sure that all colleagues are aware of the risks to pupils' well-being, are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern. Leaders work closely with a range of other agencies to ensure that pupils in difficult circumstances receive the help they need
- Current information shows that, overall, pupils are making better progress than

was the case at the time of the last inspection.

- Leaders keep a sharp eye on pupils' attendance and absence. They recognise that persistent absence slows their learning and increases their vulnerability. The school is effective in supporting and challenging pupils whose attendance is too low to come to school more regularly.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- You and your leadership team rightly recognise that progress is not yet consistent enough, and that further gains are required to increase improvement across subjects, year groups and groups of pupils.
- Current progress across subjects and years groups points to uneven effectiveness. For example, pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating faster than in geography and science.
- The school's checks on students' progress show that achievement is improving overall. Nevertheless, it is not yet as strong as it should be for students following AS courses.
- The school's work to prevent pupils falling into the persistent absence category is not yet effective. The overall proportion of pupils who are still persistently absent has not yet decreased significantly.
- Governors have considered their own capacity to bring about school improvement and are actively seeking an additional governor with expertise in school leadership.

External support

Governors' considered response to agreeing external support is testimony to their increased capacity for leadership and management. For example, with the support of the main sponsor, they have successfully seconded human resources and financial expertise to the school and they have agreed packages of well-focused support to improve teaching and learning. Governors ensure that high-quality external support is being provided. For example, governors have agreed the support and challenge of a national leader of education to sustain senior leadership development.

You have used the monitoring and evaluation schedule and the work of a range of external support consultants to strengthen middle leaders' skills in developing teaching practice and managing their teams. Middle leaders value this development work. Overall, this is leading to better learning and pupils' progress is accelerating.

The expertise provided by a range of partner schools and of the teaching and learning consultant attached to the school has made a positive contribution to the overall improvements in the quality of teaching

Governors have agreed a further tier of support that focuses on specific subject area development because they know that improvements in some subjects are not as fast as they want them to be.