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Mr Sean Preston
Acting Headteacher
Crawshaw School
Robin Lane
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LS28 9HU

Dear Mr Preston

Special measures monitoring inspection of Crawshaw School

Following my visit to your academy on 30 April 2014, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and members of the senior leadership team, the executive headteacher and representatives of the governing body. The proprietor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection two teachers have left the academy. One senior leader is due to retire at the end of the summer term. The process is under way for the academy to become a sponsored academy.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You, your leadership team, staff and governors are strongly committed to tackling the areas for improvement identified. Governors have acted quickly to strengthen the senior team by securing an executive headteacher to work with you and other existing senior leaders one day per week. With his support, and that of the local authority, appropriate plans have been put in place and the academy's weaknesses are beginning to be addressed. However, some targets set for year-on-year increases in students' attainment and progress do not fully reflect the urgency with which improvements must be secured and the ambition of you, senior leaders and governors for the academy. Milestones to enable the academy's progress towards end-of-year targets to be monitored have not been identified, making it more difficult to judge if the academy's improvement is on track. Nevertheless, restructured governing body committees have sharpened the focus on monitoring the academy's work. Governors have not been able to move forward with securing a substantive headteacher or a permanent senior leadership team structure because the process of becoming a sponsored academy is still under way. As a result, despite external support and the willingness of you and your team, leadership capacity to bring about the rapid improvement needed remains limited.

Training to improve the quality of teachers' questioning and marking has taken place and the most recent monitoring by your senior leaders indicates that this is beginning to have a positive impact. This monitoring has also identified a small number of staff who need help to improve the quality of their teaching and individualised support plans are in place. However, it is too soon to see if this work is having a sustained impact on developing the practice of individual teachers. The academy's most recent monitoring, although not covering all staff, has not identified any inadequate teaching. Your senior team is rightly aware that 'snapshots' of lessons have to be considered alongside students' work and current performance data to judge accurately how well teaching over time is improving.

The whole-school focus on improving student punctuality and preparedness for learning has already made a difference. More students are arriving at the academy promptly with the necessary basic equipment and, as a result, the amount of lost learning time in lessons is decreasing. Action to reduce the proportion of students who are persistently absent is beginning to bear fruit and the number of fixed-term exclusions has also declined, compared with a similar period last year.

Data relating to students' performance are beginning to be used more effectively by you and your senior team to highlight underperformance and ensure that subject leaders are aware of the extent of improvement required. Additional English and mathematics support for targeted students in Year 11 is in place to help accelerate

their progress. However, for 2014, predicted improvements in attainment, for example, the proportion of students on track to gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, are very modest, reflecting the extent of students' past underperformance. In the sixth form, leaders are hopeful that 2014 results will show a marked increase in success rates at AS level in those subjects where historically performance has been poor.

External expertise is being utilised effectively to help bring about improvement in a number of areas. For example, a specialist leader in education is working closely with the English department to improve teaching and develop the skills of subject leaders and a local authority officer has supported a review of the sixth form to identify the most urgent priorities. A link with the Regional Science Learning Centre has also been established, but this work has yet to begin. Governors have commissioned their external review and the National Leader of Governance has completed the initial part of this work. They have responded promptly to recommendations with regard to improving the degree of challenge in the questions that they ask. Their ability to challenge effectively and ask pertinent questions is being further supported by the more frequent and realistic information about the academy's performance they are receiving from you and your senior team. Governors have also engaged a National Leader of Education to review the academy's use of the pupil premium funding, additional government money for disadvantaged students.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector