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Simon Turney
Principal
Tamworth Enterprise College and AET Academy
Birds Bush Road
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Dear Mr Turney

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tamworth Enterprise College and AET Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 22 September 2014, 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 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 June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, the governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, students, the chair and another member of the governing body and the Regional Director of Education for the AET multi-academy trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also attended a scheduled meeting of the academy's Raising Attainment Team and joined the principal for a learning walk that involved brief visits to a range of lessons. The academy's improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the following staffing changes have occurred: a new head of mathematics and more stable staffing in the mathematics department; a new head of science and a new second in the science department; new heads of

geography, history and religious education to replace the previous head of humanities who left the school. In addition, the governing body has been restructured and two new governors appointed.

Main findings

All the areas for improvement noted in the last section 5 inspection report have begun to be tackled but, at this early stage in the term, impact is minimal.

The academy's records indicate that the quality of teaching is improving but it is yet to have sufficient impact on learning. The school can already point to individual teachers whose performance has improved as a result of the checks made on teaching and the subsequent support provided. Internal and planned external moderation is being used to tackle weaknesses in the accuracy of teachers' assessments, which was highlighted by gaps between predictions of students' achievement and actual attainment in 2014 results.

Weaknesses in achievement in mathematics had a direct impact on the overall disappointing results in 2014. Problems with staffing in the mathematics department have been dealt with. A new head of department is ensuring more strategic leadership and the school's records show that the quality of teaching in the department is improving.

The systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress, behaviour and attendance have been simplified. As a result, teachers now have the information necessary to enable them to plan lessons to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students. The academy's Raising Attainment Team meetings reflect a new stronger focus on the performance of identified students and groups. Stronger links between subjects and a newly introduced academic monitoring system are being developed. An external review of the use and impact of pupil premium funding is planned for this term.

There is good awareness of the need to promote students' literacy skills. Support for students with very low reading ages is effective. Despite an increase in supporting students' literacy skills, it is not clear that sufficient attention is yet given to improving the reading ability of all students whose reading ages are less than their chronological ages.

Students say the new behaviour management policy, introduced at the beginning of this term, is leading to fewer incidents of disruption in lessons. They believe this is because students understand the consequences and because most, but not all, teachers are applying the policy promptly and effectively. However, students also say that behaviour outside the school building, during break and lunch times, still needs to improve.

A curriculum review is being undertaken. Changes have already been made to aspects of the science curriculum and to the number of BTEC courses offered and other changes are being planned.

A restructured governing body and the introduction of new members with relevant skills, knowledge and experience have begun to strengthen governance. Governors' understanding of key issues and priorities is being enhanced by the fact that a new member of the governing body now regularly attends the academy's Raising Attainment Team meeting. Governors are currently undertaking a self-review exercise prior to organising an external review of governance, which is due to take place this term.

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

Regular support is being provided by the AET multi-academy trust. However, the impact of support provided for mathematics last academic year was not evident in outcomes in mathematics in summer 2014. Links to another school in the AET trust, whose overall effectiveness was judged good at its last inspection, are being discussed. The principal should explore additional external support beyond the trust, for example, by observing good practice in an outstanding school, particularly one where the promotion of strong literacy skills is a key factor in students' ability to make rapid and sustained progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire and the DfE Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Gwendoline Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector