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10 December 2013

Mrs Nicola Cooper  
Headteacher  
Kepier  
Houghton Le Spring  
Tyne And Wear  
DH4 5BH

Dear Mrs Cooper

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kepier, Sunderland**

Following my visit to your academy on 9 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 October 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:

- arrange an external review of the Governing Body's current practice to help assure an increase in the pace and a sharpening of the focus of the support and challenge the Governing Body brings to the academy
- build capacity so that the support for vulnerable students and their families is more precisely targeted to improve these students' attendance and behaviour and to raise their aspiration.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the leaders for English and mathematics and the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy post-Ofsted monitoring and other related plans were also evaluated.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes at the academy since the section 5 inspection.

## **Main findings**

The academy has recognised and accepted the actions it needs to take to improve since the section 5 inspection. It is making reasonable progress because the leadership of the academy is taking direct, prompt and appropriate action to address most of the areas for improvement. In particular, in its focussed support of the work of the English and mathematics departments, senior leaders are helping middle leaders to be more effective in the monitoring, training and leadership of their subject areas.

The recently introduced cross curricular approaches to literacy and marking, including more diagnostic feedback for students, are helping the academy eradicate inconsistencies in the development of students' literacy skills.

The academy's mentoring programme which is, rightly, targeting low achievement and low aspiration in vulnerable students in year 11, many of whom are receipt of pupil premium, is beginning to have an impact. Members of staff from across the school, including all members of the senior leadership team, engage regularly with vulnerable students through a detailed programme of support and challenge. There is a high level of direct parental involvement in this programme.

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

## **External support**

Potentially effective links, especially in support of the work of the English and mathematics departments at the academy, have been established with two successful local schools, Cardinal Hume and Castle View. These actions have focussed on teaching and learning and leadership and management. The academy is also looking to extend external support further by buying into the expertise of Durham local authority.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and as below.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans

## **Her Majesty's Inspector**

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the academy has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the academy has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] - for academies