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12 June 2014

Brendan Plunkett
Interim Principal
Hartsbrook E-Act Free School
Town Hall Approach Road
Tottenham
N15 4RX

Dear Mr Plunkett

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hartsbrook E-Act Free School

Following my visit to your school on 12 June 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 school's recent section 5 inspection.

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

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim principal and other staff with key roles, the head of primary transformation from E-Act, and three representatives from Lion Academies Trust. I had a telephone call with the Chair of the Raising Achievement Board. The sponsor's statement of action and the school's post-Ofsted action plan were evaluated.

Context

Following the inspection there have been several changes of staff: the principal, deputy principal and a class teacher have left the school. In March, an interim principal joined the school from a primary school in a neighbouring local authority. A decision was taken to find a new sponsor for the school. The Lion Academies Trust will fulfil this role but the planned handover has been delayed. Another interim principal, appointed by Lion Academies Trust, is set to join the school imminently to oversee the handover phase and the school will reopen as an academy under a new

name in September. Following a review of governance, the governing body was disbanded and replaced by a 'raising achievement board'. This small group was made up of senior staff from E-Act and Lion Academies Trust.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The sponsor's statement of action covers all the areas for improvement identified at the inspection. Importantly, the school's post-Ofsted action plan aligns closely with the statement of action. Both plans were written to cover only short-term immediate actions. The timeframe is coming to an end and so both plans are due to be refreshed with new actions that extend further into the future. The responsibility for this will now fall to Lion Academies Trust. A weaker element of both plans is that targets for pupils' progress are not based on accurate assessments of their starting points at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, there is a heavy load on the interim principal to lead the actions. The role of other staff in taking responsibility for leading actions has been limited until very recently with the temporary appointment of three staff in the role of 'raising standards leader'.

The interim principal has made a positive start on implementing actions in the school's plan. A planned programme of training is supporting teachers to improve their practice. Despite considerable support to improve quality in the Reception classes, provision is still constrained by the available outdoor space. Much has been done to improve the security and safety of the site and facilities for pupils' playtime. Essential systems and policies, including a new safeguarding policy, have been put in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Any absence is followed up quickly although there is a way to go to improve overall attendance rates. Parents and carers are updated and kept informed through a parents' forum initiated by the interim principal. He has also kept in regular contact with representatives from the local authority.

The raising achievement board has met half termly to monitor the actions taken and the progress made. Members hold the interim principal to account for what is being achieved. This small group was formed for an interim period only; it does not function as a governing body and is not representative of all groups within the school.

The current sponsor has provided a high level of support to improve the quality of provision both directly and through support from staff at a local school. Regular visits to review practice, with detailed notes of findings and recommendations for future actions, have helped to keep actions moving at pace.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose but will come to an end in July.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose but does not extend beyond this term.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the new 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 Haringey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon
Her Majesty's Inspector