

Serco Inspections

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James Bowkett

Principal

Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Weekley Glebe Road

Kettering

NN16 9NS

Dear Mr Bowkett

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 24 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, three Deputy Principals, an Assistant Principal, the Deputy Head of Primary, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and the sponsor's Primary Director for Education and their education adviser, business services director and human resources officer. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

There have been significant staffing changes, and a new leadership team has been created, since June 2014. Forty teachers left at the end of last academic year and a similar number were recruited to replace them. New appointments from September 2014 include a Deputy Head of Primary, Assistant Head of Primary, two Heads of

House, Director of Community, Director of Learning, Director of Achievement, Director of Inclusion, Directors for English and mathematics and Head of Sixth Form.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The sponsor's statement of action does not properly address the main weaknesses identified in the June 2014 inspection and lacks clarity about how some shortcomings will be rectified. For example, it is unclear how important weaknesses in mathematics teaching in Years 3 to 6 will be addressed and how the level of challenge will be increased for the most-able and disadvantaged pupils. The statement does not make clear the milestones to be achieved between September 2014 and December 2015. Consequently, it is difficult to judge the impact of the actions taken on academy outcomes over the next four terms. The timing and sequence of actions are not always logical. The statement does not contain all of information that it should. For example, arrangements to inform parents about the actions planned for the academy and how their views will be gathered and taken into account are not included. The sponsor was given the guidance on how to complete a statement of action during the inspection.

An Academy Improvement Board has been set up and it has met once since June 2014. It is appropriately monitoring the progress made on key priorities and oversees the work of the local governing body. Its membership includes the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body and a sponsor representative who provides independent scrutiny of the progress made in addressing key priorities. The governing body has increased in size and new governors have been suitably chosen because of their skills and expertise in areas such as finance, marketing and safeguarding. Governors have attended training which has improved their effectiveness. Governors are now linked with departments, which has increased their visibility and their first-hand knowledge of the quality of education provided. Innovative recruitment work, led by the Principal and supported by governors, has ensured that the very large number of teachers who left in July 2014 have been quickly replaced.

Inspectors recommended that an external review of governance is undertaken to improve governors' effectiveness. The review will be conducted on 20 November 2014. Inspectors also wanted an external review of the academy's use of pupil premium funding (additional government money for disadvantaged pupils) to be carried out. This will be done on 7 November 2014. Governors are aware that they must act on any recommendations arising from reviews.

The academy improvement plan is not prioritised effectively. Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are tackling too many weaknesses. The milestones to be achieved are often not specific enough. For example, progress targets in English and mathematics, for different groups of pupils to achieve in Years 1 and 2, are unclear. Sixth form attainment and progress measures are not properly identified. Monitoring arrangements do not always make clear which senior leaders, governors, subject or

sponsor leaders are evaluating the impact of work undertaken. The timescale for action is clear, but costings and the resources used to achieve objectives are not always made sufficiently explicit. The Principal was aware that the improvement plan was not good enough, and had begun to improve its quality in advance of the inspection.

All staff, and other adults, who come into regular contact with pupils have been appropriately vetted to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central register contains all the required information.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The sponsor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire, the Education Funding Agency and the Academies Advisers Unit. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Rzeznik
Additional Inspector