

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

18 November 2014

Mr Nick Watkiss
The Headteacher
Willow Brook Primary School Academy
190 Church Road
Leyton
London
E10 7BH

Dear Mr Watkiss

Special measures monitoring inspection of Willow Brook Primary School Academy

Following my visit to your school on 18 November 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 May 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with yourself and the senior leadership team. I met with representatives of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with the Chief Executive Officer of the proposed sponsoring academy trust. The statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. We conducted a brief tour of the academy. I scrutinised written reports on external reviews of governance and the use of pupil premium.

Context

Since the last inspection the headteacher has left and you have been appointed as interim headteacher until September 2015. In your role as School Improvement Director for Griffin Schools Trust, you supported the school immediately following inspection, by completing and submitting the academy's plan of action. The senior

leadership team includes three deputy headteachers, two of whom had just taken up their posts at the time of the last inspection. Several changes in middle leadership have taken place. New leaders for literacy and mathematics have been appointed. The education for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is currently being led by one of the deputy headteachers. Eleven teachers have left the academy. Three more are due to leave in December 2014. Nine new teachers have been appointed. Four support staff have left and have not been replaced. Some changes have been made to the structure of classes in Years 5 and 6. The academy currently remains as a stand-alone trust, although it has received extensive support from the Griffin Schools Trust since January 2014. The intention is that it will become a formal member of the Griffin Schools Trust from January 2015. External reviews of governance and the academy's use of pupil premium have been completed. Senior leaders and governors have completed safer recruitment training.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have supported school leaders effectively in establishing a suitable plan to tackle areas for improvement. Your experience and expertise have enabled you to secure the confidence and respect of your colleagues and fellow governors quickly. This has enabled you to make expectations of leaders and teachers clear and secure some important immediate changes. Your approach to the consultation with parents in the process of improvement is well considered and appropriate to the context of the academy.

The academy's action plan sets out the intended steps to tackle key issues for improvement, with precise timescales for completion. The people who you have identified to help support staff training and to monitor the success of the plan are clearly identified. However, there are some aspects of the plans which are less effective. For example, you are coding actions green on completion rather than when evidence of impact is obtained. The way improvements in teaching are intended to increase the pace of pupils' progress is not identified clearly enough. You have decided to revise the basic principles of behaviour policy so it is based on shared values. This is a positive move.

The external review of governance has enabled governors to be better informed about their role in the improvement process. Newly appointed governors are bringing a wider range of expertise to bear on the key issues. They understand the urgency with which improvement must be sought more fully as a result of their recent training and the support which the academy trust has provided. An executive headteacher from a nearby local authority has very recently completed a review of your use of pupil premium funding. Your action plan indicates that the findings of the review will be incorporated, but this has not yet been done.

You have also acted promptly to improve site security by adapting gateways and fencing. A suitable rota of supervision has been introduced. Governors have

completed a comprehensive safeguarding review, resulting in a plan with clear milestones and measures for success. A second review of this plan is due to be held in December 2014.

Following the inspection, the academy trust acted decisively to support the academy and its leadership. Its statement of action sets out its intentions, proposed actions and ambitions unambiguously. The trust has been particularly effective in assessing the immediate needs of the academy and ensuring people with the right skills are available. Members of the trust have a robust strategy for the long term development of the school and succession of leadership.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's action 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 Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector