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27 November 2014

A P Wilson
Interim Principal
Golden Hillock School - A Park View Academy
Golden Hillock Road
Sparkhill
Birmingham
B11 2QG

Dear Mr Wilson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Golden Hillock School - A Park View Academy

Following my visit with Jacqueline Wordsworth, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Chris Chapman, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 25–26 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

- The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.
- The sponsor's statement of action and the school's development plan are both fit for purpose.
- I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Trustees, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector, Senior

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead and team inspectors.

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2014

- Urgently improve the academy's work to keep students safe by:
 - ensuring that safeguarding concerns are thoroughly investigated and procedures followed rigorously
 - strengthening the provision for personal, social, health, economic and citizenship education
 - provide effective sex and relationships education
 - making sure students and staff develop their understanding of risks associated with extremist views.

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - have access to, and use, better information about what students already know to set work at the right level
 - mark students' work more regularly themselves and give helpful comments on how to improve.

- Improve students' achievement, especially in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations for students' attainment and progress, and that they insist on a high standard of presentation of written work from students
 - ensuring that the progress of different groups of students is tracked and monitored rigorously by subject, year and class, so that teaching can be adapted to accelerate progress where necessary
 - ensuring that specific programmes of support and intervention for disabled students and those with special educational needs are thoroughly monitored and evaluated to check on their success and to inform the planning of further support activities
 - developing monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium funding, is being spent effectively to improve students' progress
 - tackling the weaknesses in reading, writing, speaking and listening which hinder many students' progress
 - enabling students to develop and apply their mathematical skills in a range of subjects.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - urgently reviewing all policies thoroughly and making sure that they are carried out in practice
 - using accumulated resources to tackle the academy's most pressing needs, especially in recruiting and retaining teachers and leaders
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, analyse data on the progress of different groups of students in all subjects, year

groups and classes, and use this information to hold staff and leaders to account for their performance

- ensuring that action plans at whole school and department level have clear and measurable success criteria
- ensuring that senior leaders develop a broader, more accurate view of the quality of teaching
- ensuring that form time is used constructively to support students' skills and personal development.

An external review of governance and the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25–26 November 2014

Evidence

Inspectors reviewed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with a group of Year 10 and Year 7 students. They met with the interim principal, the executive principal, academy trustees, the chair of the new local governing body, members of the senior and middle leadership teams, administrative staff, a Birmingham Local Authority Resilience Officer and a British Forces Imam. They observed lessons across all year groups and a range of subjects, most of them jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They also observed break and lunchtimes and one assembly.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, there have been significant staffing changes across the academy including at senior and middle leader level. There are permanent teacher vacancies in science, English and mathematics and in the leadership of science and humanities. There are temporary absences in science, humanities and technology and in posts of responsibility for pastoral care and students' behaviour.

In November, the academy's local governing body was inaugurated and the chair of governors and the other governors were interviewed and appointed.

Her Majesty's Inspectors were aware during the inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the academy in response to the allegations were considered, alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection, to inform inspectors' judgements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards remain too low and students make too little progress in both key stages. In the 2014 national examinations, the proportion of students attaining five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics grades dropped to 43%. The proportion of students making expected progress in English and mathematics also declined. On all measures, students' performance worsened.

Evidence from lesson observations, from books and from discussions with students confirms this picture of significant underachievement. Students know, understand and can do far more than they are expected to show in lessons. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on interpreting pie charts, students had first to review $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ of very small amounts and then complete a straightforward exercise;

the activity was too easy for most pupils. An inspector asked a student to read from a mathematics textbook a page on pie charts; he read the text and answered questions about the number of degrees in a circle and fractions of circles. In a Year 7 reading lesson in the IT suite, students with weaker reading ages were working through a program designed to improve their phonics knowledge (letters and the sounds they make). One typed in repeatedly 'f-r-o-m'. She could read the word and spell it, but had been stuck at this level for two or three weeks because she got bored, did not compete the level and so each week the programme started here again. In the student's bag was her current reading book - a young teen's novel which she read well and could discuss. In another Year 9 mathematics lesson, students completed work on tally charts which is frequently undertaken in Key Stage 1. In Year 8 English books, students had completed work on simple, complex and compound sentences – work that they said they had done in Year 7 and in primary school in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 11 French lesson, students struggled to recall basic French vocabulary and barely uttered the language.

In contrast, inspectors did find some examples of students displaying high levels of knowledge and understanding, engaging in critical enquiry. For example, in a lower set Year 11 history lesson on the First World War, students displayed extremely good knowledge of key facts and personalities and made links between the events preceding the war and the likely outcome of the Treaty of Versailles. Inspectors observed several examples of students achieving well in religious studies: for example, Years 8 students' books displayed a good understanding of the Trinity; Year 9 books covered the concept of pilgrimage well, in several faiths, and Year 11 students explored the existence of God and faith through the work of Thomas Aquinas. However, these examples were the exception rather than the rule.

The quality of teaching

Teaching remains inadequate. Evidence from books, examination results, lesson observations and conversations with students confirms that teaching is not improving at a fast enough rate. Students themselves identify where teaching is weaker. Key weaknesses in the teaching observed include: teachers' subject knowledge; poor marking within and across subjects; not using prior information about students' attainment and progress well enough; and the consequently inaccurate match of work to ability in lessons. In addition, inspectors observed many examples of poor classroom management, such as: lack of whole-school classroom routines and agreed expectations; poor starts and ends to lessons; late starts to lessons and time wasted; and students talking over teachers and getting up to leave without permission or dismissal and not being corrected.

Key Stage 3 is major cause for concern. There are systemic weaknesses in how students are set by ability and how they are consequently perceived by staff. In addition, there is no clarity about how long Key Stage 3 lasts – two years or three. The interim leader of mathematics reports that until very recently, students in Key

Stage 3, including Year 7, worked from GCSE textbooks and were assessed against GCSE grades – a deficit model. This has now been remedied. Nevertheless, there is no clear rationale or philosophy for Key Stage 3 and no recognition that it is not simply a transit room to be hurried through to get to Key Stage 4.

One reason why Key Stage 3 is so poor is that transition arrangements from Year 6 to Year 7 are also poor. Students in Year 7 do not get off to a good start in their secondary education. All of those who met with an inspector said that they were happy at school, but not one said that they preferred it to their primary school. They mostly found the work too easy and had done much of it before.

The curriculum for religious education has improved and is now compliant with the Birmingham locally agreed syllabus. Students are increasingly being exposed to other religions. They have a growing understanding of faiths and beliefs other than their own. However, a minority of students still exhibit an underlying disrespect for other faiths. This is being challenged appropriately by the staff. There is evidence also of an increase in the active promotion of British values within subjects. Tolerance and respect are recurrent themes across the academy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Safeguarding procedures have improved since the previous inspection. The 'single central record' of adults working at the academy is now compliant. The safeguarding policy has been updated and is now in line with current legislation. Child protection procedures have been tightened up; referrals are made in a timely manner and actions clearly recorded. Records are kept safe. Risk assessments for the site are generally acceptable and kept up to date. The management of safeguarding incidents that involve adults has also improved; these are appropriately referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer. The 'Prevent' strategy is now in place but further training for staff is needed.

There are longstanding weaknesses in the academy's oversight of basic welfare and health and safety arrangements in relation to, for example: first aid; educational trips; medicines; and storage of materials and equipment. The arrangements at breaks and lunchtimes need to improve. During wet and cold weather students congregate on the corridors to keep warm. All students have lunch time at 1.30 pm, so the whole school, apart from one year group, gathers at the main dining room at the same time. Year 7 students called this 'the chaotic lunchtime'. They dislike the lunchtime arrangements, the canteen organisation and the food.

Leadership of behaviour is currently under review following the absence of staff members who led on this aspect of the academy's work. Previously, these members of staff patrolled corridors at breaktimes and supervised students. In their absence, individual members of staff have not stepped up to take wider responsibility for whole-school behaviour. Consequently, behaviour has deteriorated around the

academy. The principal is currently reviewing all of the behaviour procedures and training requirements for staff.

Attendance is improving. For the period 1 September to 22 November 2014 attendance was 96%, which was higher than during the comparable period last year. However, the group with the lowest attendance in this period was Year 7, the youngest pupils in the academy. Arrangements to chase up non-attendance have been tightened; staff understand that absence can often be an early indicator of child protection concerns.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Very strong, strategic leadership by the trustees, executive principal and interim principal is driving change at a much more rapid pace than was the case at the previous monitoring inspection. A lot has been done in a short space of time. They are making difficult staffing decisions and taking robust action to remedy weaknesses in safeguarding and child protection. This has, rightly, been the overriding priority since the previous monitoring inspection. Consequently, there have been major improvements in this aspect of the academy's work.

The principal is now fully aware of the complexities facing the academy and is under no illusion about the amount of work to be done. Students like him. A group of Year 10 students said of him: 'He makes us feel like young adults. We see him all the time. He wants to know our opinions. Before, you had no say in what was going on.'

The members of the senior leadership team support the drive for change and the principal's vision. Not all middle leaders and other staff, though, have full confidence in the ability of senior leadership team to effect change. A lot of their frustration can be linked to the severe staffing problems the academy faces.

Developments have also begun on the curriculum and teaching. Subject reviews are under way. A student tracking system has been established with regular assessment entry points. Lesson observations are taking place, as are scrutinies and moderation of students' work. An audit of the curriculum has been completed to establish where British values can be taught. Much more, though, remains to be done.

Work has begun to engage with parents through the establishment of a regular newsletter on the academy's website and a programme of regular meetings. Much work has been done on the school's post Ofsted action plan which is now a robust and thorough plan; fit for purpose.

External support

The academy is benefiting from the close links it has with Birmingham's Prevent and Resilience Officers and the skill and expertise of the interim academy trustees.

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the trustees have now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose.