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8 February 2013

Mr Paul Edgerton  
Principal  
Kings Rise Academy  
Hornsey Road  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B44 0JL

Dear Mr Edgerton

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Kings Rise Academy**

Following my visit with Jacqueline Wordsworth, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 6 and 7 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, senior leaders and other members of staff, members of the governing body and three representatives of the academy foundation. They spoke with pupils in lessons as well as speaking informally with them at break times. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

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

The academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

## **Context**

Kings Rise Academy opened on 1 November 2012 following the closure of Kings Rise Community Primary School. The academy is sponsored by The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. There are currently 210 pupils on roll, about a quarter of whom are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. This is a similar proportion to that found nationally. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. There are greater proportions than is found nationally of pupils identified as having special educational needs or who have a statement of special educational needs. There has been very little movement of pupils into or out of the academy since it opened. The academy opened with a full complement of staff and there have been no problems with recruitment.

## **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

Children start at the academy in Nursery and Reception with levels of learning and development that are below those found nationally for their age. They have limited self-confidence and their speaking, listening and attention skills are under-developed. The majority of these children have low levels of social skills and, consequently, do not engage well with others. Their reading skills are at a very early stage of development.

The academy's own assessments of the pupils' learning during the short time since the academy opened indicate that virtually all pupils are making at least the progress they should. Pupils with special educational needs across all year groups are making at least the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these pupils are not learning as quickly as others so they are not catching up with other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding, make progress similar to other pupils.

The majority of pupils are working at attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are below those expected for their age. However, as pupils move through the academy, their attainment is closer to the expected levels. This indicates that the progress the pupils make is enabling them to catch up with other pupils nationally.

There are gaps in pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 do not have a secure understanding about odd and even numbers. In Year 5, pupils were unable to confidently present data in a simple bar chart. The presentation of pupils' work is variable; frequently, although improving, it lacks sufficient care. A minority of older pupils have not developed a neat joined style of handwriting. Conversely, a few pupils demonstrate higher levels of attainment, such as when Year 2 pupils were using complex punctuation and vocabulary in their writing.

## **The quality of teaching**

Teaching is improving but there is still not enough teaching that is good enough to enable pupils to make the rapid progress needed to make up for underachievement in the past. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to this and have good attitudes to learning.

The best lessons are well planned to interest and challenge all of the pupils in the class. Teachers use their knowledge of what the pupils can do and their good understanding of the subject to ensure that each lesson builds on the pupils' previous learning. Teachers are very clear about what the pupils should learn and make sure that the pupils understand this too. As lessons progress, teachers and their assistants continually check on pupils' learning so that they can intervene quickly when pupils are having difficulty or provide more challenging work to extend the learning of those that are ready. In these lessons, teaching assistants have been well briefed and, consequently, provide effective support for pupils. This is frequently of particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs as it helps them to learn effectively alongside other pupils. Nevertheless, the provision for these pupils does not enable them to learn as quickly as others. Pupils are often given tasks where they have to work together. On these occasions, they cooperate well and are respectful of others' work.

When teaching is less effective, this is often because it does not challenge all pupils to learn as quickly as they could. This is because teachers do not check what pupils know well enough before planning lessons or check how well they are learning during lessons. For example, on occasions, pupils are given tasks to complete without having all of the necessary skills because gaps in their knowledge have not been identified. Teachers do not always recognise these problems quickly enough during lessons or identify pupils who could be moved on in their learning. Consequently, the rate at which pupils learn is not as rapid as it could be.

The quality of marking of pupils' work has improved. Teachers provide helpful guidance about what pupils have done well and how they can improve. However, pupils do not always follow this guidance or respond to their own targets set in their books. Consequently, they do not routinely benefit fully from this work.

The academy has made improvements to the fabric of the building. As a result, several classrooms are now much more conducive to stimulating learning. However, a minority of classrooms do not represent good models to pupils because they are cluttered or untidy. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's learning opportunities are limited because they are not able to choose from a wide enough range of different activities, indoors and outside, throughout the day.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are courteous to each other and respectful to visitors. They mostly have improving attitudes in lessons and respond well to clearly established classroom

routines. This is not the case in the very few lessons where classroom routines are not consistently applied. Pupils are keen to explain that they feel part of an extended family and are able to say how this makes a difference to the way that they treat each other. Pupils feel that they are listened to and their ideas are valued.

The academy keeps records of incidents of inappropriate behaviour. However, these records lack sufficient detail of the actions taken in response to specific incidents. Consequently, it is difficult for the academy to monitor the effectiveness of its strategies to manage behaviour.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are able to explain in detail the dangers of cyber-bullying and the actions they can take to prevent this from happening to them. They have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying such as that related to race and culture. Their understanding of homophobic bullying is less secure.

The academy has implemented effective strategies to encourage good attendance. There are clear rewards to motivate pupils to attend. As a result, there are no concerns about the levels of attendance since the academy opened.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the academy**

The academy, with good support from the sponsor, has accurately identified the most important priorities for development. It is in the process of developing an appropriate improvement plan. The plan is based on key issues which are linked to suitably challenging outcome measures based on pupils' progress. At this stage, the actions do not include enough detail, such as about the specific aspects of teaching which need to be improved. The action plan includes milestones to check on progress but these do not include enough measurable criteria. Nevertheless, the impact of the academy's improvement work is already becoming evident. For example, the academy has begun some targeted intervention work for pupils in Year 2 and this is already resulting in these pupils making more rapid progress in their learning.

The academy has begun an appropriate programme of staff training. This is already having an impact on improving the quality of teaching, such as the teaching of reading for younger pupils. Teachers receive written feedback about the quality of their work but this does not include as much detail as it could to help teachers to understand how their teaching is helping pupils to learn.

The academy checks the progress of its pupils regularly. It has started to analyse this information but this analysis does not currently include enough detail about the progress made by different groups of pupils.

The academy is in the process of recruiting its governing body and setting up its systems and procedures. The small number of governors who have already been appointed have set up their terms of reference and begun to plan a committee

structure. They have a very clear understanding of the needs of the academy and their own training needs. It is too early to measure the impact of the work of the governing body.

The academy has developed effective strategies to engage with parents and carers. For example, it has introduced activities such as cookery classes for parents and carers to attend with their children. These activities are helping to raise the profile of the academy and are having a positive impact on pupils' punctuality and attendance. Parents speak highly of the sessions the academy has organised to help them support their children with reading.

### **External support**

The Elliot Foundation has provided considerable support for the newly appointed Principal in setting up the academy. The trust has carried out a baseline assessment of the academy. An Executive Principal from the trust has worked closely with the academy Principal to prepare an action plan for improvement. He has also supported the Principal with planning the effective intervention work in Year 2.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the provision for those pupils identified with special educational needs to enable them to make progress that is at least good.
- Improve the classrooms and outdoor areas to make them more appropriate for learning by:
  - making sure that all classrooms are tidy and well organised, representing a good model for pupils and so that they have a sense of pride about them
  - providing good opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to experience all areas of learning in the classroom and outdoors.
- Improve the systems to monitor pupils' behaviour in order to be able to identify and eliminate any trends of inappropriate behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**