

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

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Mr K Todd
Headteacher
Greenway Academy
Greenway
Horsham
RH12 2JS

Dear Mr Todd

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greenway Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 14 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The academy should take immediate action to:

- enlist external expert assistance with managing responses to the findings of the previous inspection, with a view to establishing a clear sense of precisely how the necessary improvements will come about
- re-write the development plan to make sure that work is steered much more strongly by the necessary gains in pupils' achievements in each year group, so that you and governors can continually evaluate your work
- identify where senior staff, teachers and governors can see, and learn from, good and outstanding practice, and strengthen links with schools locally that can provide support for your work
- seek an urgent external review of governance with the aim of clarifying the ways in which governors can make a real difference here.

I will meet with the full governing body as soon as possible to explain the findings of this visit in detail.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your assistant headteacher, and with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation had taken place with a representative of the local authority before the visit. We visited every classroom very briefly. The academy improvement plan was evaluated.

Main findings

The academy has been too isolated, for too long. It lacks clear, consistent and challenging external contributions to the evaluation of its work. You therefore do not have a good sense of how it measures up against best practice elsewhere, and you and your staff are not well placed to learn from good and outstanding practice in other similar schools that are good or outstanding.

Judgements of the quality of individual lessons are sound but are not put alongside evaluations of the progress being made by pupils, and so judgments about the quality of teaching cannot be incisive. Action planning does not convey a clear sense of your priorities. There are few links between actions and clearly stated expectations of the rapid improvements in pupils' progress required. Actions are not associated with resources, and neither are there clear indications about who will monitor and evaluate the impact of specific aspects, and when. This means that governors cannot have a clear role in supporting and challenging improvement so as to enable this to become a good school within the timescale expected.

There is some training for teachers and other staff, but there is no overall training plan in place which corresponds to the priorities in the development plan. Good practice cannot be therefore propagated across the academy in a coherent fashion. For example, Year 6 teaching has a sense of urgency about it: pupils can, and do, make up some lost ground over their final year. There has been no identification of how teaching that promotes this better pace of learning can be introduced into Years 3, 4 and 5.

The system to monitor pupils' progress is not being used well yet, despite having been purchased over a year ago. This is a symptom of a general lack of urgency in getting a grip on exactly what the progress of pupils is like in every class, and being able to intervene swiftly to make necessary improvements.

Governors have not addressed the need to commission an external evaluation of the effectiveness of their work. They are therefore not improving their capacity to offer sufficient challenge to the academy to help it to improve to become good.

The academy is a calm, stable and orderly place. Pupils in the classrooms visited were seen to be attentive and well-behaved, if rather passive, learners.

Senior staff have already arranged to attend an Ofsted 'Getting to Good' conference in December, and they show interest in similar opportunities. There is an evident willingness to improve and no sense of denial about what needs to be done; neither are excuses made.

Ofsted will carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The academy does not work closely with any other significant group of schools, with the local authority, or with any other support agency. Some links exist with other schools in the West Horsham Network, and there is a well-established teaching school in the town, but there are few indications of links making a significance difference. The academy cannot therefore easily compare its effectiveness to that of other schools that have faced similar challenges, and be inspired to try out new ideas and strategies.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector