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17 October 2013

Mr Jonty Archibald
Head of School
Regents Park Community College
King Edward Avenue
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Southampton
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Dear Mr Archibald

Special measures monitoring inspection of Regents Park Community College

Following my visit to your school on 16 October 2013, 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 July 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the head of school, the executive headteacher, a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, two groups of staff and a group of students. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, the headteacher has resigned, as has the Chair of the Governing Body, the latter being planned before the last inspection. A formal partnership is being set up with a neighbouring 'teaching school' (a school where

teaching has been graded outstanding by Ofsted) under which the headteacher of that school will also lead Regents Park as executive headteacher. She started in this role at the beginning of term. Under the terms of the partnership, support is already being provided for teaching, leadership and behaviour. The local authority is in the process of applying to the Secretary of State for the governing body to be replaced by an interim executive board (IEB). The head of school, previously deputy headteacher at the school, took up his post at the start of this term to lead the school on a day-to-day basis. He is joined by six other new staff, replacing five who have left.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Arrangements for long-term governance are not stable enough for governors to be involved properly in the drive to improve the school. Governors are keen to support the school and the governing body continues to function but is not involved enough in planning how to bring about improvement, or identifying how progress will be checked.

The executive headteacher and head of school have brought fresh stimulus to the work to improve teaching, leadership and students' behaviour. Staff and students are responding positively to early work on ensuring, for example, that lessons have clearer learning objectives, teachers check students' progress in lessons and work is properly marked. Staff from the partner school are beginning to build the capacity of Regents Park staff to improve. Curriculum leaders welcome the greater freedom, alongside more explicit responsibility, for deciding how to improve their subjects. Students appreciate the more consistent approach by staff to managing behaviour, using the consequences pyramid. However, the school's improvement plan is underdeveloped and does not show clearly enough the sequences of steps, over time, which will bring improvement and a removal from special measures. It is not clear how the impact will be checked, or by whom. It is crucial that leaders at every level are fully engaged in constructing clear, simple plans where they identify the changes they want to make, give persuasive reasons why, and cite how they will know what difference has been made. The school's better GCSE examination results in the summer show there is good practice to be built on, but the school development plan is not the tool it needs to be to ensure this is capitalised on.

The local authority statement of action sets out clearly the steps it will take to monitor and support the school. It contains a well-argued strategy of making use of capacity in local schools to support each other. The local authority is well aware of the need to use the check points built in to make sure the impact is as it expects, but it needs to do more to communicate with governors about their role, pending the decision regarding the IEB.

Following the monitoring inspection these judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector