

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 679 9153  
**Direct email:** naik.sandhu@serco.com

24 January 2014

Paul Halcro  
Principal  
The Bulwell Academy  
Squires Avenue  
Nottingham  
NG6 8HG

Dear Mr Halcro

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Bulwell Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 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 November 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders and two members of the governing body, including one of the academy's joint sponsors, Thomas Telford School. A telephone discussion took place with the Chair of the Governing Body, who represents the second sponsor, The Edge Foundation. The inspector visited 12 lessons with the Principal. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

There have not been any significant changes in the academy's context since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require special measures.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The Principal and senior leaders have acted swiftly to refine management systems that strengthen accountability for students' progress. The introduction of a 'teacher scorecard' makes a clear link between the quality of teaching and the progress of students in different classes. Training has focused on planning for progression, supported by a common lesson planning format. This is helping teachers to consider the learning needs of students and the level of challenge in the tasks planned. As a result, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are rising, linked to national expectations. The introduction of a marking 'stamp' is providing students with feedback on the quality of their work, and pointers for improvement. Students are expected to respond to the feedback. Students spoken to during the visit indicated that they found this to be helpful.

A priority for the academy is to strengthen consistency and to use the pockets of good practice identified during the inspection. This has led to staff working across different curriculum teams. A good example is the work between teachers of English and science. Teachers are sharing different approaches to teaching that challenge students to actively participate in lessons. Monitoring information from progress checks, lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny is used increasingly to provide improvement programmes for teachers. The next step is to ensure the accuracy of assessment through internal and external moderation.

Training has been provided to staff on managing behaviour. Systems to monitor and improve attendance continue to be embedded. Improving attendance remains a challenge for the academy.

The governing body has been slow to respond to the inspection findings. A date for an external review of governance, including a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, has not been set. The Chair of the Governing Body acknowledges that governors need to be more visible in the academy. Training is required for some of the link governors responsible for reviewing priorities in the improvement plan.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action and improvement plan meet statutory requirements, but are not fit for purpose.

This is because the improvement plan does not have enough dated milestones to check on progress. Monitoring arrangements are identified but it is unclear who will evaluate progress, and how this will be reported to governors, and when. The plan does not include the use of external sources to validate the evaluations and

judgements of academy leaders. Financial resources have been identified by the sponsors to support improvement; it is not clear how this money will be spent. Discussions held with one of the joint sponsor's, Thomas Telford, indicate that plans are well advanced to commission external support to strengthen capacity in areas requiring most improvement. A commitment was made to revise and strengthen the improvement plan to provide a robust mechanism for checking progress.

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 and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikić  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**