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Mrs Marie George and Mrs Tracey Peters
Associate Headteachers
Stockland Green School
Slade Road
Erdington
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Dear Ms George and Ms Peters

Special measures monitoring inspection of Stockland Green School

Following my visit to your academy on 24 March 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 on 4 December 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, associate and assistant headteachers, the Chair of the Trust Board and the Chair of the Local Governing Body. The sponsor's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, a head of English and literacy has been appointed to start in May 2014. Two English teachers have been appointed; one starts in April and the other in September.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders and governors have responded with determination to improve the academy quickly. The academy is well placed to make rapid improvement.

There has been an increase in monitoring activities in order for senior leaders to gain a clear view about the quality of teaching and learning across the academy. Training for teachers has sensibly focused on what is described as the 'big four'; questioning, differentiation (ensuring that teaching takes account of students' different abilities), marking and assessment. Individual and specific training has also been given to newly qualified teachers and teachers whose teaching is not yet good. Leaders are confident that this package of training, along with regular checks on its impact, has led to overall improvements in the quality of teaching. However, there remains a significant level of inconsistency in the quality of teaching. During short visits made to classrooms, it was noted that teachers' marking in some books is erratic and not following the agreed policy for marking. These inconsistencies are not being picked up and tackled by subject leaders, an omission that is not being challenged sufficiently by senior leaders.

Students' attendance is improving. Senior leaders have successfully created a culture where all staff feel responsible for improving attendance. There are now systems in place, 'catch up cards', which ensure that students catch up on any learning they miss following a period of absence. Year 10 attendance remains a concern. While the academy is taking action, the levels of absenteeism in Year 10 are having a detrimental impact on students' learning.

The numbers of exclusions are falling. This is the case for all groups of pupils. All classrooms now display behaviour charts explaining what will happen when students' behaviour is not good enough. There has been an increase in the use of praise and rewards to promote good behaviour. The academy's tracking of behaviour shows that behaviour is improving with an increase in the ratio of positive to negative behaviour logs. While this is an improving picture, senior leaders are aware that there continue to be lessons where students are not fully engaged and, as a result, their behaviour is not good. The academy's policy for all students to understand what is expected of them by having descriptors of good and outstanding behaviour in their planners is not being consistently followed.

There is convincing evidence that senior leaders have quickly responded to the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. A number of initiatives and improvement activities have been introduced but these are not all being consistently followed through. Senior leaders are not rigorously holding subject leaders to account for these inconsistencies. The focus on evaluating the quality of

teaching has been a key activity and has drawn on a range of evidence to ensure that an overview judgement can be made. Senior leaders have very detailed plans and records but this amount of paperwork is sometimes creating a lack of clarity. The academy's improvement plan, for example, goes into excessive detail and needs amending to more clearly outline the key actions now needed to improve the academy and how these will be measured.

Governors both at Trust and Local Governing Board levels have increased their scrutiny of the academy's work. A review of governance, recommended at the time of the previous inspection, has not been completed and this must be completed urgently and action taken based on the findings before my next visit.

The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership has provided good support for the academy. The other schools in the multi-academy trust are providing opportunities for sharing good practice.

The single central register which is a safeguarding check on all staff was complete.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection but strongly advise that leaders ensure that the support and training provided includes observing good practice in other schools in the multi-academy trust.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Trust Board, the Chair of the Local Governing Body and the Director for Children's Services at Birmingham local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector