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12 May 2014

Ruth Murad
Principal
Montgomery Primary Academy
White Road
Sparbrook
Birmingham
B11 1EH

Dear Mrs Murad

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Montgomery Primary Academy

Following my visit with Linda Killman, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 7–8 April 2014, 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 following a request from the Secretary of State.

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspectors scrutinised documents and policies relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, self-evaluation documents, minutes of the Management Board, and records of accidents and behaviour incidents. They met with the principal, other leaders, teachers, support staff and members of the Management Board. Her Majesty's Inspectors also talked to pupils, parents and carers both informally and in meetings. They visited classrooms and spent time talking to pupils and observing their behaviour on the playground and in the dining room. They also considered 74 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements

The quality of leadership and management requires improvement

Context

This academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school. All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being of Pakistani heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium funding, because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.

The school became an academy in October 2012 following the closure of its predecessor school, Montgomery Primary School. It is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust. The Management Board, made up of representatives from the academy trust and leaders of other schools, governs the academy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say that they feel safe at the academy and that behaviour is usually good. Their parents and carers agree. Pupils believe that bullying and racist incidents hardly ever happen. They are confident that academy leaders do not tolerate such behaviour.

Pupils understand the academy's core values and told Her Majesty's Inspectors that it is important that they all get along well together. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Most pupils behave well in their lessons, in the playgrounds and around the academy. Staff record incidents of poor behaviour and accidents that do occur but leaders do not use this information to track and analyse trends or to check if behaviour is improving over time.

The school conducts regular and thorough assessments of potential risks to pupils and staff, including when making off-site visits. During the inspection, staff and pupils evacuated the building quickly and quietly during an academy fire drill practice.

The quality of leadership and management

The principal and her team have secured the confidence of the staff, pupils, parents and carers.

The academy carries out and keeps records of all necessary safeguarding checks. Although adults in the school know how to recognise child protection concerns they are less clear about how to report concerns about staff. For example, there is little understanding of the role of the Local Area Designated Officer in dealing with possible safeguarding concerns involving members of staff. The child protection policy gives good guidance to staff about how to identify issues such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Individual members of staff have some knowledge about the risks of extremism in schools but leaders have not provided guidance or training to the academy staff about how to identify these risks or how to mitigate and address them. School leaders have not informed staff about the government guidelines on the prevention of extreme and radical behaviour as set out in the 'Prevent' programme.

School leaders have responded to a recent external audit of how well pupils keep themselves safe when using the internet, but this work is at an early stage. Parents and carers say that they would like more information about e-safety and how they can keep their children safe when they use the internet at home.

The academy provides sex and relationship education to ensure that pupils understand the changes in their bodies as they grow up and about reproduction. However, they have a narrow understanding of the variety of family relationships that exist.

The academy provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about the beliefs and practices of a range of world religions. Links with schools in contrasting locations, lessons in religious education and associated visits to places of worship deepen pupils' understanding of how their beliefs might differ from those of others. Pupils talk respectfully and knowledgeably about people with different beliefs.

Attendance is improving and very recent work with families is beginning to reduce absence for those pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly. When pupils return from extended periods of absence, learning mentors work with them to help them catch up. However, there is no system in place to check pupils' health and welfare on their return. The academy no longer authorises holidays during term time.

Members of the Management Board have the appropriate skills and experience to govern the academy and hold it to account rigorously. They track pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching well but do not receive enough information about pupils' behaviour to determine if it is improving over time.

The Management Board plans to establish a governing body with representation from the local community, parents and staff. It has acted decisively to ensure that those responsible for governance have the necessary skills and work towards the agreed priorities. Its members have decided to prolong the work of the Management

Board in order to investigate effective ways to recruit appropriate candidates for the new governing body.

External support

The Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) provides support for leadership and teaching. It has not used the support available in either Birmingham or nationally to consider the potential risk of extremism in the academy. Similarly, the local authority has not promoted its own 'Prevent' strategy, a government funded initiative intended to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism.

Priorities for further improvement

- Use the information the academy gathers to track the behaviour of pupils more rigorously.
- Provide training and support for all staff members and those responsible for governance to help them reduce the potential risks associated with extreme and radical behaviour
- Ensure that appropriate and suitably skilled candidates are recruited to the new governing body

Her Majesty's inspectors will continue to monitor the school and will consider this is in determining the timing of the next full inspection.

I am copying this letter to AET, the Director of Children's Services in Birmingham, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Management Board and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector