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11 June 2014

Richard Westergreen-Thorne
Executive Headteacher
The Bromfords School
Grange Avenue
Wickford
Essex
SS12 0LZ

Dear Mr Westergreen-Thorne

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Bromfords School

Following my visit to your academy on 10 June 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 28 January 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, an acting headteacher, the newly appointed permanent headteacher, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The academy's statement of action and action plan were evaluated.

Context

The new permanent headteacher will take up his new role in September 2014. As executive headteacher, you and the acting headteacher continue to lead and manage the academy on an interim basis. A senior leader and a middle manager have relinquished their leadership and management responsibilities but remain part of the teaching staff. Two teachers have left the academy. There are currently teaching vacancies in science, mathematics, humanities and physical education. Senior leaders and governors are actively recruiting to fill these posts.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have made suitable plans to tackle the issues raised at the last inspection. Senior leaders have assumed full responsibility for monitoring the impact of these plans in raising students' achievement and the quality of teaching, and improving students' behaviour. Additional training and higher expectations of subject leaders are ensuring that they also contribute towards the academy's improvement. A middle leader now has overall responsibility for analysing the achievement of students before they join the academy and overseeing their transition into in Year 7.

Leadership and management at all levels are becoming more systematic. Improved procedures for assessing, collating and using assessment data are providing leaders and managers with a clearer overview of how well students are progressing. Regular assessments of students in all years indicate that most of them, including those of different abilities and backgrounds, are making improved progress compared with the previous year. This year, the proportion of students attaining at least five A* to C grades including English and mathematics is expected to rise to above average and notable gaps in attainment between different subjects are expected to close. In the sixth form, a higher percentage of students have remained in the academy to continue their studies in Year 13. Current data show that the majority of them are making expected progress.

Senior leaders feel that students' improved progress is due to better quality teaching. Their monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of students' work show that the proportion of good or better teaching is rising. A combination of robust monitoring of lessons and much higher expectations of teachers, intensive staff training and targeted support for those who need it most is enabling staff to understand the expectations of them and what they need to do to meet them. Senior leaders recognise that more needs to be done to gain greater consistency in the marking of students' work.

This year, fewer students have been temporarily excluded from the academy or removed from lessons due to their poor behaviour, supporting the views of senior leaders and governors that behaviour is improving. They report that the academy is a much calmer place to be. Sanctions and rewards for managing behaviour are being applied more consistently, but senior leaders acknowledge that this is not yet happening in all lessons. Students in each year group have a learning manager to monitor their behaviour and welfare, including their attendance. This is leading to improvement. Attendance is rising and is much closer to the national average.

The governing body has acted decisively to appoint a new permanent headteacher, and to provide enhanced support for senior leaders until he takes over next term.

The academy's new leader will amend the improvement plan at this stage. Training for governors has increased their understanding of how to challenge leaders to secure improvements. They show a clear understanding of the issues facing the academy and the actions required to improve it. Plans have been made to strengthen governance further by recruiting two experienced school leaders to support the governing body. Good links with the local authority are being used to arrange further support for leaders and develop partnerships with other schools in the local area.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector