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4 July 2014

Mrs M George and Mrs T Peters  
Headteachers  
Stockland Green School  
Slade Road  
Erdington  
Birmingham  
B23 7JH

Dear Mrs George and Mrs Peters

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Stockland Green Academy**

Following my visit with Judith Long, Additional Inspector, to your school on 2–3 July 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham and as below.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013

- Improve teaching so that all students make good progress, particularly in English, and the proportion of students who attain grades A\* to C in all of the subjects they study to at least the national average by making sure that:
  - teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of students of all abilities in the class, including the most-able students
  - all teachers, including of English, use every opportunity to support students to develop basic literacy skills and have high expectations of the presentation of students' written work
  - written feedback to students makes clear the next steps for improvement in the subject as well as in the accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
  
- Raise the attendance of all groups of students to at least the overall national average by making sure that:
  - students, parents and the local community become more aware of the direct link between good levels of attendance and achieving well, and the importance of not taking holidays during school term times
  - all teachers take responsibility for promoting good attendance and supporting students to catch up on any learning that they miss when they are absent from school.
  
- Reduce exclusion rates of all groups of students to at least the overall national average by implementing consistently effective systems to manage and improve the behaviour of those students who do not conform to the school's expectations.
  
- Improve students' behaviour in lessons and around the school site by:
  - making sure that teaching engages and motivates all students so that disruption to learning is minimised and positive attitudes to learning are promoted
  - eliminating boisterous behaviour around the school site by helping students to understand the need to be aware of the impact of their behaviour on other students.
  
- Strengthen the leadership of the school by making sure that:
  - the actions of the leaders of the academy trust and senior and subject leaders are focused on improving the quality of teaching, students' achievement, behaviour and attendance

- the school development planning is based on accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness, reflects the priorities of the school's work and includes measurable criteria by which success can be judged
- the judgements made on the quality of teaching routinely take into account the impact of teaching on students' progress
- leaders of subjects, other areas of the school's work and individual teachers are held to account and take responsibility for the areas for which they are responsible
- leaders, including governors, ensure that the spending of the pupil premium funding has a direct impact on the achievement, behaviour and attendance of the students for whom it is intended to support.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2–3 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with both associate headteachers, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Arthur Terry Multi-Academy Trust, the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, and senior and middle school leaders. Inspectors visited 26 lessons, jointly observing with senior staff.

### **Context**

Since the inspection in December 2013, three heads of faculty and two teachers have left the school. New leadership posts to strengthen the leadership function include a head of faculty to lead literacy. There are more staff for the 'guidance centre' targeted at improving attendance and behaviour. The academy has successfully recruited permanent staff ready for the start of autumn 2014. Student numbers are rising. Year 7 in 2014 is filled by parental first-choice places. At this inspection, no Key Stage 4 students were on site, with the exception of a small number of Year 10 students doing their work experience week in the academy.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

School data shows that academic standards of Year 11 are below average but in line with predictions based upon their low starting points when they arrived at the school. Data for subsequent year groups are much more positive, with current Year 10 students on target to attain broadly average standards and exceed the nationally expected levels of progress in all subjects, including in English and mathematics. Although inspectors found a wide range of academic standards in students' written work, there is consistent evidence of improvement since the beginning of the year. There is a common approach to tackling poor written presentation in all lessons that is becoming established. This includes marking to improve written literacy standards in all subjects. The gap in attainment between different student groups and that of all students nationally is very closely tracked. That tracking shows some closing of these gaps but there is still some way to go before they have been eliminated entirely.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers are using clear prior attainment and progress data to plan lessons that accommodate the range of learning needs of their students. There are extension or specific challenge activities for more-able pupils. These good plans, however, are not yet consistently delivered. Where teaching is good, and that is the majority of the time, teachers continually observe, question students and then refine their teaching in the light of the learning that is occurring. Where teaching still requires

improvement, teachers do not allow students enough time to embed their learning or practise new skills, but move everyone on to the next activity. Many teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions that are well pitched to the ability of a student to answer. They expect extended answers, and probe for further explanations or call on other students to extend the response. Sometimes, however, the questions are 'closed' and the teacher accepts the first correct single-word answer without checking for understanding. Teachers sometimes assume that when one student guesses the correct answer, then the rest of the class also knows that answer; then the teacher rehearses the full explanation and assumes that students have followed it fully. There are occasions when, actually, none of the students have understood the original answer, let alone the explanation.

Day-to-day marking shows, in most cases, good adherence to the new marking policy. This includes a range of regular assessment points that provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their progress. However, the quality of diagnostic feedback to pupils remains too variable. It ranges from very sharp action points that demand and get prompt student responses, to repeated requests to 'improve presentation' that are being subsequently ignored by students and staff alike.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The academy has successfully tackled poor attendance through a concerted approach by all staff, very well led and managed by new leadership of this aspect. As a result, attendance is improving rapidly, including very good improvements in the attendance of students who previously were persistently absent. Part of this success lies in a much clearer behaviour management policy. The policy includes specific support for students who misbehave regularly, using a layered guidance system with specialist teachers and support staff. It has halved the frequency of fixed-term exclusions. A behaviour support room is used to provide continuing education and support, with close supervision for students who might otherwise be at risk of exclusion. Students who have experienced this support say it has been very helpful in teaching them how to avoid future misbehaviour, how to manage a potential conflict with teachers better, and has helped them to 'enjoy lessons now'.

Inspectors saw no boisterous behaviour around the site at this visit. Students move calmly between lessons, arrive on time and are considerate of each other and of adults. In the majority of lessons, students enjoy their work. Where they have the opportunity, they manage practical work responsibly and collaborate well on group activities. On the minority of occasions where teaching has not fully engaged them, students' patiently wait for their chance to contribute.

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

Senior leaders have made great strides towards tackling the areas for improvement identified at the inspection in December 2013. The joint headteachers lead by very

good example, and have established a buoyant and confident culture amongst other school leaders and staff that inspires confidence and commitment.

The review of governance did not identify clear strengths or areas for improvement, but left the governing body with some questions to consider. The review has not been helpful; of more impact has been the Trust's own leadership of change that has brought new governors to the academy with the skills to meet the needs that the Trust has identified. The academy improvement plans are underpinned by specific student achievement targets and milestones. The joint headteachers' reports to governors are brief but detailed enough to clearly inform, and include successes as well as areas that are not yet on target. The reports would further benefit from overall judgments against the four Ofsted 'aspects' that form the main headings of the report. The evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding is developing, and will be a focus at the next monitoring inspection.

### **External support**

External support by the chief executive of the Arthur Terry Multi-Academy Trust has been effective and constructive; there is a strong sense of shared purpose and ambition to raise the achievement of students through raising the quality of teaching. The academy trust leads very good professional development for staff in Stockland Green at all levels. Joint training across other academies in the partnership, and a strong commitment to coaching for leadership at all levels, are having a positive impact on students' achievement. The training has allowed middle managers to understand and accept greater accountability for students' achievement. All managers can accurately identify the impact of teaching on learning.