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Mr Craig Platt
Acting Academy Leader
Glendene Arts Academy
Crawlaw Road
Easington Colliery
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 3LP

Dear Mr Platt

Special measures monitoring inspection of Glendene Arts Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 18 September 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 in June 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy acting academy leader, the Chair of the Governing Body and one of the co-opted governors, a representative of the local authority and the two external partners from a local authority school, currently providing in-academy support for senior leadership for two days per week. I also spoke with a small number of the teaching staff during a walk around the academy. I read and evidenced a range of academy documentation, which included the single central record of checks made on adults who work with pupils in the academy, as well as pupil behaviour and restraint logs and minutes of the most recent governing body and senior leadership meetings. I also read and evaluated the academy's post-Ofsted action plan.

Context

There have been some significant changes since the previous inspection. All but one of the former governing body have resigned and have been replaced with a new Chair, three new parent governors, one local authority and two co-opted members. Two vacancies remain. This new governing body was fully constituted on the 18 July and will meet formally as a full group for the first time in late September. Some initial smaller governor group meetings took place last term to take forward some of the necessary instruments of governance. In parallel to this, members of the academy trust also resigned very recently, and have been replaced by three members from the governing body; including the Chair, who is now also Chair of the Trust. The Principal, who was not present at the time of the recent inspection, has now resigned. The acting academy leader and acting deputy academy leader remain as the senior leadership team. One of the permanent Vice Principal academy leaders is on long-term sick leave, as are two other staff members. There remains some short-term staff absence. Two part-time teachers completed their contract and left the academy at the end of last term. Four teaching assistants, on short-term contracts, joined at the start of this term, together with one long-term supply teacher. Several members of staff are currently suspended, awaiting disciplinary and other hearings. Some class reorganisation has also taken place from the start of this term, with separate classes being created for those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) at Key Stages 2 and 3, and 4 and 5 respectively. There remain other classes that combine those pupils with PMLD with pupils who have specific learning or disability needs. The academy currently receives two days of advisory support per week from a local authority headteacher who is a National Leader of Education, and a deputy headteacher from the same school.

The quality of leadership and management at the academy

The overall quality of leadership and management of the academy remains inadequate with significant shortcomings in the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. The current acting academy leader and acting assistant academy leader do not yet show sufficient clarity, vision and strategic thinking to ensure that all the improvements needed will be expedited as a matter of urgency, in order to ensure that all pupils at the academy receive the quality of education that specifically meets their needs. There is far too little professional engagement between senior leaders and all staff and governors to ensure that a coherent and coordinated approach to academy improvement is being made. The academy action plan, for example, has been written by senior leaders and has not yet been shared fully with all staff and governors. This plan has significant weaknesses and undervalues the contributions that should be expected from the staff and governors. The priorities and associated actions do not relate specifically to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection; there are no explicit references to the roles and expectations of staff and governors to either deliver the actions or

evaluate the impact of them on improving the quality of education for all pupils; there are no clear milestones to aid the assessment of on-going progress against stated actions for either senior leaders or governors over the life of the plan; and, the criteria used to measure the success of actions are imprecise and far too general to be of help. Governance has not yet improved, but given that there has been a protracted period of disruption in this area since the previous inspection, with a resolution to this only being fully achieved very recently, there are some legitimate reasons for governor inactivity. As a consequence of these disruptions, however, the recommended reviews of governance and the academy's use of the pupil premium in the previous inspection report have yet to take place.

Although some progress has been made in better safeguarding pupils at the academy, issues remain. The single central record needed some administrative errors corrected during this monitoring visit and although compliant in terms of content there is an immediate and urgent need to get enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on three adults currently working at the school where this has not yet been done; confirmation of the outcome of these checks should be shared immediately with the Her Majesty's Inspector who is monitoring the school's progress. Safer recruitment training is being programmed for relevant staff but there remain some significant gaps; for example, the acting academy leader has not yet completed this training. The behaviour and restraint logs are inadequate as they lack the information required to be recorded and reviewed on an incident by incident basis in order to assess any significant issues or training needs that must be addressed immediately. Also, despite the academy buying the services of the local authority for overviewing, screening and approving out-of-academy visits, the academy's completion of the required risk assessments, as part of this local authority written agreement, is occasionally incomplete and represents a foreseeable risk to the pupils.

Following the monitoring inspection, and the failure of the proprietor (Trust) to provide a statement of action, the following judgements were made:

The proprietor's (Trust) statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The academy's action plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not 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 Durham, and the DfE Academies Advisers Unit. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely
Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector