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15 September 2014

Razia Ali
Acting Principal
Nansen Primary School – A Park View Academy
Naseby Road
Birmingham
B8 3HG

Dear Mrs Ali

Special measures monitoring inspection of Nansen Primary School – A Park View Academy

Following my visit with Lorna Fitzjohn, Regional Director, together with Andrew Cook and Deborah James, Her Majesty's Inspectors, to your academy on 12 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 that 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 that took place in April 2014.

Evidence

During this monitoring inspection, meetings were held with the Acting Principal, the senior leadership team, pupils and the board of trustees. A survey of staff was conducted and inspectors scrutinised the 79 returns. Informal discussions were held with parents. Her Majesty's Inspectors considered the responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also made short visits to lessons. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

The Acting Principal has been in post since January 2014. The board of trustees and governors in place at the time of the previous inspection have since resigned from the academy and a new board of trustees were appointed on 15 July. The Vice Principal is currently absent from work.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The Acting Principal and senior leadership team have not demonstrated the capacity to improve this academy quickly enough. There is no clear direction or vision of how to address weaknesses. Senior leaders lack an in-depth understanding of the complexities of issues and they are unrealistic about what they need to do.

The new trustees have very recently written a statement of action. They understand that this statement, in its current form, is inadequate. It lacks detail, has not been shared widely and fails to give clear direction to improvement. The academy's action plan has been rewritten many times. The plan remains weak because it does not include effective monitoring and evaluation procedures. As a result, leaders are not being held to account for their actions. It also remains unclear when actions are to be completed. Consequently, leaders do not know if they are on track with proposed improvements.

The academy employs 10 Assistant Principals. Their roles and responsibilities are not sharply focused on the right priorities – for example, no one currently holds responsibility for data and achievement. As a result, the leadership of this academy is ineffective.

During the summer term, the previous trustees and governors failed to hold leaders to account for their work to improve the academy. Valuable time was lost and senior leaders say they saw very little of the trustees over the summer term. The Department for Education worked closely with the academy following the inspection in April 2014. However, the new board of trustees was not appointed until 15 July. The new trustees show a good level of understanding of the significant and complex issues to be addressed.

Senior leaders are working with a range of external partners to deliver aspects of the required improvements. However, there is a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities and no monitoring of impact. For example, the plan of support from a local outstanding school has been presented as a list of tasks to be completed, with no agreed expectations of impact. With so many partners, leaders are receiving conflicting messages leading to confusion and, in some instances, unhelpful advice.

Curriculum plans are beginning to be developed with the help of an educational consultant. Senior leaders have implemented plans for all subjects for the autumn term that provide guidance of what needs to be taught. However, the plans do not go beyond the first term. Longer-term plans lack detail and so there is no clarity to how they will be successfully delivered.

Pupils are positive about how the academy is improving. They are pleased with changes to the building, such as the new canteen. They report that music lessons have been reinstated.

Staff members are generally positive, recognising that improvements are underway. They report feeling more united as a team.

Parents who spoke to the inspectors held mixed views. Although many were positive about the academy, some expressed a lack of confidence in senior leaders.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

- The sponsor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.
- The academy's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Park View Education Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate

- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector