

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 01216 799154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com

11 September 2014

A Wilson
Interim Principal
Golden Hillock School - A Park View Academy
Golden Hillock Road
Sparkhill
Birmingham
B11 2QG

Dear Mr Wilson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Golden Hillock School – A Park View Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 10 September 2014, with Andrew Cook and Deborah James, Her Majesty's Inspectors, 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 which took place in April 2014.

Evidence

During this monitoring inspection, meetings were held with the Interim Executive Principal, the Interim Principal, the senior leadership team, two of the trustees from the Park View Educational Trust (PVET) and groups of students, including some undertaking GCSE religious education courses. Her Majesty's Inspectors spoke to 16 individual parents at the end of the academy day and undertook a brief tour of the academy. They reviewed the sponsor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plans. They also conducted a survey of staff and scrutinised the 73 returns. There were too few responses on Parent View for inspectors to consider.

Context

The new Interim Executive Principal of the group took up his position on 1 September 2014, together with a new, Interim Principal at Golden Hillock School. The majority of the trustees of the PVET group resigned following the inspection in April 2014; one director remains in post. New trustees were appointed in July 2014. The Interim Principal of the academy is supported by a leadership team of one Vice Principal and three Assistant Principals, plus the Director of Support and Financial Service of PVET.

Since the inspection in April 2014, there have been considerable staff changes: 18 teachers have left the academy, 15 new teachers have joined and, currently, 14 supply teachers are working in the academy on long-term contracts.

During this inspection, Her Majesty's Inspectors were aware that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the academy in response to the allegations were considered at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Following the inspection in April 2014, the former trustees failed to take any substantive action to address the weaknesses raised in the inspection, thus holding back the academy's progress. The Department for Education has worked with the academy since the inspection in April. New trustees, headteachers from outstanding local schools, were not appointed until 15 July. The evidence indicates that the new trustees understand the context within which the academy operates and have a realistic view of the magnitude of issues it faces. They are in the early stages of drawing together an improvement plan.

The trustees' first action was to appoint an Interim Principal. Responses from the staff survey welcomed the new leadership but recognised that it was 'very early days'. Unlike the trustees, however, the Interim Principal has yet to grasp the full complexity of the issues facing the academy. Half of the responses to the survey indicated remaining concerns, including long-standing unease about middle leaders holding roles for which they are not appropriately qualified or experienced. Other responses referred to a lack of clarity in line management arrangements and lack of accountability for poor examination results.

Safeguarding remains a significant concern. The new trustees took some early, important staffing decisions in this area and issued to staff new, explicit guidelines

about behaviour on social media that will not be tolerated. During the summer term, staff undertook initial, basic training on safeguarding, the Prevent Strategy, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and grooming. More training is planned. As a result of this initial basic training, some staff have been more willing to report any issues of concern, confident that they will now be followed up. For example, senior leaders challenged a supply teacher who conducted a lesson which was not part of the school's Religious Education curriculum. This was contrary to the established school policy at that time. Senior leaders were of the opinion that aspects of the lesson appeared to promote an inappropriate Islamist ideology. However, senior leaders also reported that, during the summer term, they were not always supported by the previous trustees in their concerns about safeguarding. There has been no change to the leadership of safeguarding, despite the criticism levelled in the report of April 2014.

Senior leaders can point to some limited work to improve the promotion of fundamental British values but recognise that, as yet, it is too early to assess its impact. Students in Year 11 studying GCSE religious studies options other than Islam report that they have to teach themselves. These students therefore remain at a significant disadvantage.

The statement of action sent to Ofsted following the inspection in April 2014 is inadequate. It does not comply with the requirement to make arrangements to inform parents of the trustees' proposed actions, to ascertain their views and to take account of their views, nor does the plan consider whether to include the appointment of a specified person to ascertain the views of parents. The original statement also fails to address the basic weaknesses in governance highlighted in the inspection report. In addition, it does not provide enough detail on how all aspects of academy life, including the curriculum, will 'actively promote' fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. Recent revisions to the statement of action, and the improvement plan that runs alongside it, do not clearly identify who will be held responsible for key areas of development.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

- The sponsor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.
- The academy's improvement plans are 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 Trustees and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington

Her Majesty's Inspector, Senior

The letter has been copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- The Secretary of State
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk if the school is a non-maintained special school
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation