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22 January 2015

Mr Thomas Marshall
Headteacher
The Baverstock Academy
501 Bells Lane
Druids Heath
Birmingham
B14 5TL

Dear Mr Marshall

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Baverstock Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 21 January 2015, 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 September 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and your senior leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the governing body as the Chair was unavailable. There is no proprietor or sponsor, so a telephone call was made to the headteacher from a neighbouring local authority who is supporting the academy. The academy's action plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher took on the leadership of mathematics. A new head of faculty has now been appointed from January 2015. Nine new governors have been appointed to the governing body following the recent

external review of governance. An external link has been established with the headteacher from a school in a neighbouring authority.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

Changes made to the senior leadership and heads of department made shortly before the last inspection are now starting to have an impact. A new system for recording students' progress has been introduced which enables leaders to track frequently and rigorously the attainment and progress of individual students and groups of learners, including students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The first set of achievement data, made available in December 2014, has given leaders a baseline to measure progress throughout the year. Data collection is more frequent in Years 9, 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7 and 8.

Leaders have ensured that achievement information entered by teachers is accurate and is supported by evidence. Leaders set realistic but challenging targets for students' progress. Support and training from leaders is enabling teachers to plan for and monitor students' progress.

Following the change in leadership in mathematics, an action plan has been drawn up and the department restructured, with focused roles for individual teachers drawing on their individual strengths. The faculty has been relocated from the top to the ground floor, where classrooms are now more accessible for drop-ins by senior leaders. Additional funding has been secured, focused on potentially higher attaining students in Key Stage 4, which has led to a significant increase in uptake for mathematics in the sixth form for next year.

The academy's predicted GCSE results for 2015, based on recent externally set tests and moderation, indicate that students in Year 11, including students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are on course to make significant improvements on the most recent examination results in 2014.

The monitoring of teaching by leaders has been extended to take account of a wider range of evidence than lesson observation. Senior leaders and heads of department are involved in scrutiny of students' work and achievement data analysis to support their judgments on students' progress and teaching. The marking policy has been revised and leaders are checking that marking is up to date, conforms to the policy and is helpful in informing students how they are doing and what their next steps should be.

Leaders have identified where teaching is not yet good and have put in place individual measures of support and challenge to bring about improvements. Monitoring of teaching is also checking that teachers are setting work at the right level for all groups of students, including students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students, those who have special educational needs and high-attaining students.

The academy's action plan is focused on the key issues identified from the last inspection, sets out milestones and indicates lines of responsibility for those monitoring and evaluating the plan. Not all success criteria are sufficiently quantified, which would further help those evaluating progress to measure the success of actions taken.

The significant changes in personnel on the governing body have ensured it has a wider depth of educational and business experience. It is too early to see the impact of these changes, but all governors have received additional training. Leaders reported that, at the most recent governing body meeting in December 2014, governors were starting to ask challenging questions about students' progress, based on the achievement data they now receive. Champions for special educational needs and pupil premium have been nominated within the governing body.

In the absence of a proprietor, sponsor or local authority link, the academy is seeking external validation through its partnerships with other headteachers; in particular, with a school in a neighbouring authority. This has provided support through the development of the action plan and through establishing links to share good practice.

The academy has not permanently excluded any student for four years but there has been a recent rise of fixed-term exclusions. The academy has ensured that students are no longer sent home as an alternative to exclusion. It is now meeting its requirements, in line with government guidance. No students are on part-time timetables. The issue of low-level disruption in classes is being tackled through focused lesson observations and drop-ins. Leaders are analysing trends in behaviour and attendance and, through the deployment of a key worker, attendance is improving for most groups, although not for Gypsy Roma and Traveller students.

Leaders have ensured that teachers in LEAP (the centre for students who need intensive support with their behaviour or attendance) and BIC (which caters for new arrivals who speak little or no English) are now members of subject departments and faculties. This is leading to improved communication between mainstream lessons and out-of-class interventions, and a greater consistency in the curriculum provision.

A greater proportion of students who receive additional support are now moving into mainstream lessons more quickly

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The academy's action plan is 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 Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and science, so that the progress and attainment of all groups of students, especially disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, improves rapidly by:
 - ensuring that teachers receive good training and support to set appropriately challenging targets for students and to assess accurately their progress in lessons and over time
 - ensuring that the long-term assessment information and the ongoing assessments from lessons are used continually to plan and teach lessons at the right level for different groups of students
 - making sure that teachers mark books frequently enough and in a way that informs students about their successes and the next steps they need to take
 - consistently and effectively challenging low level disruption so that the focus is on learning in all lessons
 - ensuring that the curriculum in the LEAP provision closely mirrors that in the mainstream part of the academy so that students do not fall behind with their preparation for examinations at the end of Year 11.

- Improve leadership and management so that all actions drive improvement in students' achievement by:
 - establishing a clear basis on which to set challenging targets for all students to enable them to make good progress
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels frequently and rigorously analyse the progress that all groups of students are making in all subjects, including in Years 7 and 8, identify where and why there is underachievement and take carefully planned actions to put this right
 - implementing a rigorous system to evaluate the quality of teaching throughout the academy, using information about students' progress as well as observations and scrutinies of students' work, and putting in place appropriate strategies to improve teaching where this is needed
 - analysing more thoroughly other information gathered in the academy, such as attendance and behaviour data, and using this to target actions in a more focused way
 - minimising the use of part-time timetables for LEAP students in line with government guidance and ensuring that correct exclusion procedures are followed if it is necessary for a student to be removed from the academy site for disciplinary reasons

- reviewing the frequency with which BIC students integrate into the main academy
- ensuring that governors receive clear, analytical reports on students' progress and behaviour and the quality of teaching so they can be more effective in challenging and supporting the academy.

An external review of governance and an external review of the academy' use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.