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Mr Craig D’Cunha
Principal
Suffolk New Academy
Mallard Way
Ipswich
IP2 9LR

Dear Mr D’Cunha

Special measures monitoring inspection of Suffolk New Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 4 March 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 December 2014.

Evidence

Meetings were held with the Principal, members of the senior leadership team and former members of the sponsor’s trust board of directors, who recently resigned having drawn up the trust’s statement of action. A telephone discussion was undertaken with the new Chief Executive Officer of the sponsoring trust. A series of short visits to classrooms were made jointly with the Principal to observe teaching and learning. The academy’s single central record of staff was checked. The sponsor’s statement of action and the academy’s improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection a new Principal has been appointed. He had been in post for seven days at the time of this visit. One interim Co-Principal left in December 2014. The other is remaining in the leadership team as Associate Principal until Easter 2015. The trustees of the academy’s sponsor, the New Academies Trust,

resigned the day before this inspection, as did all the members of the governing body. A newly appointed board of trustees for the New Academies Trust immediately assumed responsibility for local governance of the academy. The new trustees are also trustees of the Active Learning Trust, and it is planned that this trust will take over as sponsor in September 2015.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Despite the high level of recent turbulence in the governance of the academy, senior leaders have worked hard to focus on starting to improve teaching and learning. Responsibilities within the senior leadership team have been reorganised to allow more careful monitoring of the progress of individuals and groups of students, and to enable appropriate help and guidance to be provided to accelerate students' progress where necessary. The measures taken to strengthen the leadership of teaching have increased the support and challenge for teachers.

The academy timetable has already been revised to provide more teaching time for English and mathematics. Leaders have clarified key policies. Evidence from this visit suggests that the quality of marking and feedback has already started to improve across the academy. Leaders are ensuring that all teachers are applying the behaviour policy more consistently and this has started to reduce the incidence of low-level disruption. Teachers now provide senior leaders with data about students' attainment more regularly and the accuracy of this information is more rigorously checked. Senior leaders are confident that their predictions of students' future performance are now more secure as a result.

The effectiveness and pace of improvement are currently restricted by weaknesses in the academy's own improvement plan. The plan currently does not cover any intended actions beyond this academic year. The academy needs a longer-term vision of its future improvement. It is particularly important that the academy considers how it will evaluate the summer 2015 examination results and act upon this evaluation. It also needs to demonstrate how leaders will deal with the challenges and opportunities presented by moving into new buildings in September 2015. The plan does not cover all the areas highlighted for improvement in the inspection report. It does not incorporate specific strands about how the academy will improve consistency in the presentation of students' work or improve communication with parents. The plan does not emphasise strongly enough the need for improvement of mathematics, which is evident in the inspection report.

The improvement plan does not outline any strategies for enhancing the quality of governance. The external review of governance recommended in the inspection report has not been undertaken or planned. The plan does not clarify who will be

responsible for leading each area of improvement, or for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these developments.

The sponsor's statement of action does not clearly outline how the trust will help the academy in bringing about necessary improvement. While it reiterates the actions academy leaders will undertake as outlined in their own improvement plan, it does not provide sufficient information about the role that the trust itself will play in supporting these developments. It also needs to provide an overview of trust support over a longer time frame, and clarify who will be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of developments.

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.

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 Chief Executive Officer of the New Academies Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lawrence
Associate Inspector