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Rabbi Yochanon Goldblatt

Principal

Beis Yaakov High School

69 Broom Lane

Salford

Greater Manchester

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Dear Rabbi Goldblatt

Special measures monitoring inspection of Beis Yaakov High School

Following my visit with John Nixon Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 12 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 school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, as Principal, other senior leaders, the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body and a National Leader of Education (NLE) from a local Teaching School who is providing support for the academy's improvement. I also met with a small group of students from across the age range of the academy, to ascertain their views about the academy. The team considered a wide variety of documents concerning the academy's work, in particular those relating to safeguarding arrangements and the quality of the curriculum, including the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, together with other aspects of leadership and management that were identified as areas for improvement in the September 2014 inspection. The governing body's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated.

Context

Since September 2014, one qualified and two unqualified teachers have left the academy. One teaching assistant and three administrative staff have also left and one new appointment has been made to the administrative staff.

Plans are in hand for the recruitment of a headteacher to support the Principal by taking responsibility for secular studies within the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You, your senior leaders and the governors are passionate about the academy's role in the community. You have all worked with great determination and speed to make good use of the outcomes of the last inspection to set out a clear strategy for the academy's improvement, with the result that all staff understand and accept the recommendations for improvement set out in the inspection report. Current actions have been focused on strengthening the skills of the governing body and putting in place more robust systems for ensuring the accountability of all staff, including non-teaching staff, for their roles and responsibilities.

Opportunities across the curriculum for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have also been audited. The small number of students, whom I met during the inspection, were highly positive about the school. Year 7 students appreciated the help they received on joining the school, which ensured that they quickly made friends. Students like and respect their teachers, seeing them also as friends who will always help them with problems in school and sometimes at home.

Students are well aware of specific risks for them associated with life in modern Britain and of the steps taken by the academy to keep them safe. Their spiritual awareness is evident, for example, in rich artwork displayed around the school. Students are aware of current affairs in Britain and more widely. They learn about democracy, for example, through mock elections, which were being prepared at the time of the inspection. Students are very clear that they bring with them from home and practise in the academy values of mutual respect for all. They learn about strong female role models and articulate their views confidently.

Students enjoy their learning, especially when they are given very challenging work, but you recognise that, as yet, this is not always the case. You are taking steps to eradicate teaching that is less than good and plans are in place to improve opportunities for teachers' continuing professional development.

The academy draws on independent external advisors to provide objective information, advice and guidance about students' future careers but students are not always aware of this nor of the routes for advanced level studies and particular careers. They are keen to obtain qualifications in a wider range of subjects and the academy is developing new curriculum arrangements that are better suited to the ambitions and future aspirations of the students.

Governors have made an immense personal commitment in their response to the issues identified in the inspection report. They have undertaken an external review

of their practice and have, consequently, restructured some committees to make them more effective. They bring to bear much expertise from their own professional backgrounds, to the benefit of the academy, of which they are very proud. Governors have been keen to undergo further training to ensure their effectiveness and have sought new governors to increase it further.

The governing body's statement of action is well aligned with the academy's action plan in terms of its format and priorities. It demonstrates governors' understanding of their role in checking that leaders at all levels are carrying out their responsibilities. This will be a crucial element in securing the academy's improvement within the next two years. Both plans require the sharpening of indicators of progress at key points, to ensure that the pace of improvement is maintained urgently. You recognise that the academy must ensure that the plans show clearly the lead person who is accountable for each action.

You have taken rapid and wise action to secure high-quality external support for the academy. A National Leader of Education (NLE) and a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE), both from a local Teaching School, have variously supported the restructuring of the senior leadership team, to strengthen performance management processes and lines of accountability, the improvement of the governing body's clerking arrangements and the introduction of formal procedures for the approval of policies. Transparent recruitment procedures and processes for reporting to governors have also been put in place. Governors have responded keenly to opportunities provided by the NLE to visit her school to observe good practice.

The SLE and NLE have made a very strong contribution to the significant improvement of safeguarding arrangements since the last inspection. An external review has been carried out by the NLE with the result that all statutory policies are in place and meet all requirements, including those related to health and safety, e-safety and visitors. The single central record was checked during the inspection and also now meets requirements.

The governing body's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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 NQTs.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Strategic Director of Children's Services for Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely



Susan Wareing
Her Majesty's Inspector