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19 March 2015

Mark Rhatigan
Headteacher
Kingsbury School and Sports College
Kingsbury Road
Erdington
Birmingham
B24 8RE

Dear Mr Rhatigan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingsbury School and Sports College

Following my visit with Suha Ahmad and Neil Morris, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 17–18 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 taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford

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
- The lead and team inspectors.

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013

- Make teaching at least consistently good, in all subjects, by ensuring that teachers:
 - set stimulating work in lessons at the right level of difficulty to engage students
 - frequently check the progress made by students during lessons and amend activities when needed to ensure a good pace of learning is maintained
 - mark books regularly, ensuring that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach and exceed their targets, and have time to respond to the advice given.
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the work set challenges students of all ability levels to aim higher
 - improving the support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium
 - ensuring that disabled students and those who have special educational needs have the right resources and are set appropriate work.
- Eliminate low-level disruption and poor behaviour in lessons and around the school, by ensuring that staff are consistent in the way they use strategies to manage behaviour.
- Ensure the range of subjects and courses offered matches the needs and interests of all students, by ensuring that:
 - sufficient attention is given to creative subjects
 - the courses students study on other sites are properly monitored
 - checks are made on how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is provided.
- Raise attendance rates by promoting the importance of regular attendance to students and their parents and carers.
- Improve subject leadership where it has weaknesses, and ensure assessment data are accurate across all subjects.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 17–18 March 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, groups of students, the executive headteacher from the preferred academy sponsor and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since my last visit, two further teachers have left and you were appointed as headteacher from 23 February 2015. Two other senior leaders have been seconded from the preferred sponsor school, one of whom is currently supporting your team for two days a week until Easter, when both will join the senior leadership team on a full-time basis. Some key middle leader posts will also be filled after Easter. The local authority is in the process of establishing an interim executive board, but this is not yet in place.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Achievement overall remains a key focus for leaders. Until very recently, the further drop in standards in 2014 was not effectively addressed so that rates of progress during this academic year were suggesting that the downward trajectory would continue. However, in the very short time since your appointment, the actions taken by you and your senior leaders are showing early promise of the much more rapid impact required.

The most recent information about Year 11 achievement suggests that in English, students' attainment will be much closer to 2014 national averages than was previously the case. However, there remains substantial progress to be made in mathematics to ensure that the percentage of students achieving five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics will reach the school's expectations and meet the governments minimum standards in 2015.

Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and others in the school, although still too great, are beginning to close in Year 11. This is because the new systems to monitor students' progress, noted at the previous visit, are now being used effectively to identify where these students need additional help. Middle leaders, particularly the leader of mathematics, are increasingly using the information provided to put in place targeted support that addresses specific gaps in skills and understanding.

We agreed that next steps should focus on ensuring that middle leaders use this information to hold teachers to account for students' progress more effectively, and

that subject teachers are supported to use assessment information to inform their planning so that such gaps are addressed at an early stage.

You have quickly recognised the need to focus on improving progress from Year 7 onwards. The very low levels of literacy of a significant number of students on entry to the school remain a significant barrier to sustained improvement. We agreed that there is an urgent need to develop and establish an approach to literacy across the school, so that all teachers are supporting students in practising and applying the skills required.

Inspectors noted that students in the 'Skills School' were making much more rapid progress. This is because the leader of this facility has worked very effectively to ensure early identification of students' needs and a sustained, targeted approach to addressing them. The students have highly personalised support from dedicated staff to develop the skills they need. Consequently, the majority are able to move on to mainstream classes in the school. In addition, students with a disability or special educational needs now have detailed 'pupil portraits' that are shared with all teachers and provide guidance for supporting each student to make more progress.

The quality of teaching

The high level of teacher absence noted at my last visit is now being tackled effectively. Consequently there has been a reduction in the number of lessons covered by supply teachers. Both staff and students acknowledge this, although students point out that in some subjects absence is still high. However, you have secured appointments for a number of key roles for the summer term and you expect to be fully staffed in September.

All the teachers spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the changes you have made in recent weeks. They cited much higher expectations of students' behaviour, of planning for lessons and of the level of challenge presented to students, alongside much greater clarity about how they would be held to account for students' progress and the quality of teaching. Teachers feel they are being supported as well as challenged to improve teaching. Inspectors noted that the vast majority were working hard to support the new ways of working. However, at this early point these new ways have not had a substantial impact on the quality of teaching overall. It remains the case that there is not enough good or outstanding teaching to ensure that achievement improves as rapidly as required.

Most teachers are beginning their lessons with the recently introduced 'Do Now' task and challenge, and many are beginning to guide students towards selecting the most appropriate level of challenge. However, too often the subsequent tasks and activities they set are the same for all students, regardless of their ability. Consequently, in these lessons, the most able are not making the progress they should and the least able students are struggling.

Inspectors saw examples in a number of lessons and subjects of teachers asking questions skilfully to encourage students to develop their ideas more fully. In the majority of cases, however, questions were directed at just a few students so teachers did not have a clear idea of how well all students were progressing. Consequently, activities were not effectively adapted to ensure that all were able to secure the intended learning.

Marking remains inconsistent. In subjects where teacher absence has been high, there are still books that have not been marked for several weeks. Most permanent staff are now marking regularly and many are providing helpful advice so that students know what to do to improve their work. However, this is not always the case and in a few subjects comments were seen that did not help students to understand their next steps. As noted above, improving literacy is a key issue for the school. Despite this, teachers do not routinely correct grammar or spelling in books or during lessons, including in some English lessons.

In subjects where teaching over time is good or outstanding, for instance in history and physical education, inspectors saw carefully planned lessons that made effective use of assessment to inform learning, well-targeted questioning that developed spoken language, marking that supported rapid progress and a firm focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy, both in written work and in lesson activities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since your appointment as headteacher, you have prioritised the improvement of behaviour, having identified this as a major barrier to learning across the school. As a result, it is now improving. The introduction of 'first time, every time' and the 'do now' task at the start of a lesson is having a clear impact. Inspectors noted that in the majority of cases, students were now arriving at lessons much more calmly and with the expectation that they would be required to settle to work quickly. Where teachers emphasised this throughout the lesson, there was a notable impact on students' engagement with their learning. However, we agreed that poor punctuality, both on arrival to school and to lessons, is making it difficult for some teachers to reinforce the practice, particularly in the first lesson of the day.

There has been an increase in exclusions as a result of the increased focus on behaviour and a 'zero tolerance' approach to non-compliance. You expect this to reduce over the next term as the minority of students who are finding it difficult to meet the higher expectations are supported to improve their behaviour. The school's monitoring shows that the number of students attending detentions and internal exclusions is beginning to reduce in line with this expectation.

Although behaviour in lessons has improved, you are aware that around the building, particularly during the lunch break, behaviour can be overly boisterous. A

significant minority of students are not always respectful to each other or to staff. Despite this, students are adamant that behaviour overall has improved. They say that in most subjects they can learn better as a result, and appreciate the changes made that have enabled this. They are clear that a major factor is the reduction in the number of temporary teachers, which means most teachers are applying the behaviour policy consistently. However, they also say that in some subjects, behaviour is still an issue because teaching is not good enough to hold their interest.

The early impact of the focus on social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, noted at the last visit, has continued. Students have a range of opportunities to discuss, share ideas and develop their understanding through Learning for Life lessons, assemblies, educational visits, community activities and visiting speakers. Inspectors noted the quality of displays around the school that promoted tolerance and understanding. Students supported this. They said that they were taught to respect and celebrate different races, cultures and traditions, pointing out that in such a culturally diverse school, this was very important to them. They reported that physical bullying was rare and that any name-calling on the basis of difference was dealt with rapidly. Although some students said that name-calling included homophobic comments, they were confident that all staff, including support staff, would challenge any such behaviour.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

In your very short time as headteacher, you have quickly established a clear sense of urgency, purpose and an understanding of what needs to be done to achieve rapid improvement. Roles and responsibilities at all levels are clearly defined and staff know who to go to for particular issues. Equally, it is clear that you have identified the key priorities and started to focus on those actions that will provide a sound basis for longer-term, sustainable improvement.

You and your senior leaders have an accurate view of where the school is now and know that teaching must improve rapidly in order to ensure that the much more challenging aspirations for students are fully achieved. The first steps towards achieving this have been implemented through the focus on improving behaviour and setting the expectations for learning to start from the moment of entry to lessons. You are clear that the consistency of these key elements must be secured to provide a firm foundation for improving the quality of teaching overall, using the best practice available in the school and its supporting partners to share and develop teachers' practice.

As a result of external checking and additional training opportunities, assessment is now more accurate. We agreed that senior leaders are analysing information about students' progress effectively to monitor achievement overall and for key groups. We also agreed that middle leaders now need support to use this information more actively in order to hold teachers to account for their students' progress. This

includes how they use assessment to plan for the learning of students, as well as to identify those needing additional help.

In Key Stage 3, the curriculum is increasingly meeting the needs of students. This is particularly the case in the 'Skills School' where individualised programmes have had a positive impact on rates of progress for targeted students. However, you are aware that a greater focus on literacy is required across both key stages to ensure that the needs of all students are fully met so that they are better prepared for the next stages of their lives.

Currently, you are waiting for an interim executive board to be convened by the local authority while academy status is discussed. It is not yet known if the preferred academy sponsor will be confirmed, and this places the leadership of the school in a position of some uncertainty.

External support

The local authority has continued to monitor the school through regular meetings with the previous headteacher. The first of these meetings since your appointment was due to take place during the inspection, but was deferred.

Currently, you are receiving both strategic and operational support through the Fairfax Multi Academy Trust, which is the preferred sponsor. This is proving beneficial and has added further capacity to the leadership team to support rapid action.