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Sir Greg Martin
The Executive Headteacher
Durand Academy
Hackford Road
Stockwell
London
SW9 0RD

Dear Sir Greg

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Durand Academy

Following my visit with Jackie Krafft Her Majesty's Inspector to your academy on 28 and 29 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the quality of leadership, management and governance at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, and a group of newly qualified teachers. They also met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. One of the inspectors toured the Hackford Road site, accompanied by two pupils. A visit was also made to the Mostyn Road site, accompanied by the consultant headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, reports to the governing body and the academy's development plan. They scrutinised the single central record of safeguarding checks and other documents relating to child protection arrangements.

Inspectors considered information about the attendance and achievement of pupils, curriculum documentation and reports sent to parents regarding their children's education. The Education Funding Agency issued the academy with a Financial Notice to Improve in March 2015. Investigations are still ongoing and, as a consequence, inspectors did not examine this aspect of the academy's work.

Context

Durand Academy currently caters for around 1,100 pupils aged from three to 14. The academy occupies two sites in Lambeth and has weekly boarding provision in West Sussex for Year 9 pupils. Plans are in place to continue expanding this provision each year. In April 2014, the school adviser and consultant headteacher joined the academy. Under the direction of the executive headteacher, these two senior leaders work closely together to run the academy. The majority of pupils are from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. More than a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is higher than average. The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the academy other than at the usual times is above average. Similarly, there is a high turnover of staff, with a large proportion of newly qualified teachers in post.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders and governors have high aspirations for pupils and are committed to ensuring that they are all enabled to fulfil their potential. Academy leaders also seek to provide opportunities that pupils might not otherwise experience, such as weekly swimming lessons, involvement in musical activities and the boarding school.

Governors have a clear understanding of their strategic roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate how they question leaders about their work, the performance of the academy and the achievement of pupils. For example, they asked questions about the dip in standards at Key Stage 1 in 2014, and sought assurance from leaders that this was being tackled. The academy's own information regarding these pupils, now in Year 3, indicates that they have made up any lost ground.

Despite these positive aspects, leaders and governors have not acted swiftly enough to strengthen the academy's development plan. This was a specific area for further improvement identified at the last inspection in December 2013. The existing plan, dated 2013–2014, is used as a working document on which academy leaders record progress and make notes of actions to take in the current academic year. It does not include clear timescales or identify milestones by which progress can be measured. The plan does not identify those responsible for monitoring or evaluating the impact of actions taken or how resources are being aligned to specific objectives. This limits the strategic effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The designated lead persons for safeguarding have received relevant training. All members of staff received a pack of policy documentation to read at the start of the academic year and have taken part in online safeguarding and e-safety training. All staff interviewed during the inspection knew who to report safeguarding concerns to and what process to follow. However, governors recognise that they have not been robust enough in ensuring that policies relating to safeguarding are discussed and ratified promptly. The safeguarding policy has not been reviewed and updated by

governors on an annual basis. The policy provided to all staff in September 2014 was not aligned to the statutory guidance, *Keeping children safe in education*. Leaders have recently updated the policy to include this guidance. However, this has not been ratified by the governing body. Other policies relating to safeguarding, for example those relating to e-safety and to the protection of children from extremism and radicalisation, are in place but are not comprehensive enough. Some teaching staff were not aware of, and had not been trained in, the government's 'Prevent' strategy, despite the academy being located in a 'Prevent' priority area.

The academy's checks to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children meet requirements. However, the single central record, where this information is stored, showed a lack of attention to detail. For example, at the start of the inspection, it did not hold all the required information for all staff members, although this information was held within the academy. The revised document, presented at the end of the first day, still contained some gaps and needed further work to ensure that a complete document was in place by the end of the inspection. Leaders and governors have commissioned a consultant to carry out an audit of all their work around safeguarding. The audit was due to start on the first day of the inspection. Nevertheless, the inspection found several areas of the academy's work around safeguarding and child protection that do not demonstrate good practice.

Middle leaders hold significant levels of responsibility for teaching and learning within their remit. Phase leaders and year group leaders meet regularly with their teams to discuss the achievement of different pupil groups and ensure that interventions are put in place to support any emerging underperformance. They undertake activities such as classroom observations and book scrutiny to ensure that improvements are embedded. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and demonstrate a commitment to the ethos and vision of the academy.

Academy leaders have updated the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 to reflect the changes made to the National Curriculum in 2014. Under the guidance of the curriculum leader, they have implemented these changes in most subjects. Teachers have welcomed this. Parents of pupils in these year groups have received information about the modules that their children will study during this academic year. However, during the inspection, academy leaders were unable to provide inspectors with information regarding the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In addition, they were unable to demonstrate how this information is shared with parents of secondary-aged pupils. Following the inspection, further evidence was sent to Ofsted by the academy, but this still did not provide an overview of the curriculum offered to Year 9 pupils. This demonstrates a weakness in this aspect of leadership and management, as information is not readily available for parents or other interested parties about the education offered at Key Stage 3, either in paper form or on the academy website.

Priorities for improvement

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the academy’s development plan includes tight timescales, specific responsibilities and milestones by which leaders and governors can monitor and evaluate progress towards the academy’s goals and the impact of its work
 - ensuring that safeguarding policies and practices are always up to date, including the implementation of current statutory guidance
 - ensuring that sufficient information is provided and is accessible to parents about the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children’s Services for Lambeth, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty’s Inspector