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29 December 2015

Mr Kevin Unsworth
Head of School
Enterprise South Liverpool Academy
51 Horrocks Avenue
Liverpool
L19 5NY

Dear Mr Unsworth

Special measures monitoring inspection of Enterprise South Liverpool Academy

Following my visit with Osama Abdul Rahim and Ahmed Marikar, Ofsted Inspectors, to your academy on 9 and 10 December 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement, which were 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:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and the 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 Liverpool.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching and thereby raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, for all students, including disadvantaged students, the most able and those with special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring all teachers adapt their teaching to suit the needs and abilities of their students
 - making sure all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve
 - providing work that is appropriately challenging to the most able students
 - ensuring all students with special educational needs get the help they need to make good progress
 - establishing a clear and coherent policy that is followed by all teachers across all subjects to improve students' basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy.

- Improve students' behaviour by:
 - eliminating low-level disruption by ensuring all lessons are suitably engaging
 - improving attendance and punctuality by working more effectively with parents so that they make sure their children attend regularly and on time.

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - reducing variability across subjects by holding subject leaders more effectively to account for performance in their subject
 - making sure that all students who do re-sit examinations in English and mathematics at GCSE level achieve this qualification.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - embedding procedures to manage the performance of teachers so that underperformance is eradicated
 - ensuring all heads of department set a good example by communicating high expectations for all students and are held to account more rigorously for teachers' performance in their area of responsibility
 - embedding current initiatives to improve the quality of teaching so that all teachers get the help, support and guidance they need to teach all groups of students effectively and, in so doing, raise achievement
 - improving self-evaluation so that it more accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the school

- sharpening the school improvement plan so that it contains clear, measurable success criteria with timescales so that the school can, at regular intervals, see how well it is doing and what still needs to be improved
- ensuring that funds available through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding are spent appropriately so that all students eligible for this support make better progress
- ensuring the curriculum effectively supports the development of students' basic skills.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 December 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive principal, head of school, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Local Governing Body and representatives from the sponsors and local authority. They observed teaching and learning in all year groups and spoke with teachers following observations. They spent time observing how pupils behaved around the academy during break and lunchtime.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, the sponsors have reduced from five to two: the Archdiocese and Diocese of Liverpool. The executive principal took up her permanent position in September 2015. The new local governing body was constituted in September and held its first meeting this month.

From the start of this academic year, all three members of staff in the religious education department are new appointments. In October, two teachers of English were internally appointed to leadership positions within the department.

Outcomes for pupils

The Key Stage 4 outcomes in 2015 were very disappointing and well below the academy's predictions. For the second year running, this means that the academy has not met the government's current floor standards. The proportion of pupils attaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics, and those making expected progress in English, was lower than the previous year. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress in mathematics was higher than in English but it remained significantly below the national figure. Actions taken in response to the poor outcomes in English in 2014 did not have the required impact, and results in this subject fell further in 2015. From September, improving outcomes in this subject has been the top priority for senior leaders. Controlled assessments are now systematically externally moderated, as are the Year 11 mock examinations. Observations of Year 11 lessons in the department during the inspection provided evidence that teachers are now focusing on ensuring that pupils have the necessary skills to answer examination questions successfully.

Following very poor results in core science, leaders have now made changes to how the curriculum is delivered. The recent mock examination indicates that Year 11 pupils are making better progress than last year. Leaders have also made changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum to prepare pupils more effectively for the demands of studying the subject in Key Stage 4.

Outcomes in 2015 show little impact of the actions leaders have taken to reduce the wide achievement gaps for the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the academy, when compared with other pupils nationally. Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities indicate that they are not making enough progress during their time in the academy.

Pupils achieve well in information technology as a result of strong teaching. This is also the case in art, food technology and business studies.

There is still significant variability across the Level 3 courses in the sixth form. Pupils achieve well in information technology, sociology, mathematics and art, but this is not the case in English where their progress is significantly below the national average. Concern remains about the small proportion of pupils who attain a GCSE grade C when resitting English and mathematics. Leaders have responded to this by increasing the teaching time in these areas.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning through learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupils' views. However, this information is not being used effectively enough to improve teaching across the academy, which remains of variable quality. Senior leaders have focused on empowering heads of department to take action to improve the quality of teaching and learning within their subject areas. This has had limited impact as the quality of leadership at this level is inconsistent.

Lessons observed during the inspection provided evidence of this variability. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve and do not challenge them to make the best possible progress. In contrast to this, inspectors observed examples of pupils being challenged to achieve the highest possible standards. This was particularly evident in sociology, information technology and food technology.

The Key Stage 3 pupils who are part of the small learning community benefit from effective teaching and a nurturing environment, which helps them to flourish. This was evident in a Year 7 English session on persuasive letter writing. The teacher's enthusiasm and his knowledge of the pupils' needs meant that they were completely engaged in their learning and able to make good progress. Many of the pupils were using high-level vocabulary in a confident and appropriate way.

The work scrutiny that inspectors carried out with senior leaders provided a mixed picture of pupils' progress. It is clear from the presentation and quality of pupils' work that teachers' expectations are not high enough. Most-able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged to produce work of the highest standard. The quality of written feedback remains inconsistent. When teachers set pupils tasks to improve

their work, too many of them do not attempt these challenges. Of most concern is that when this happens, teachers do not pick this up.

Target setting and assessment procedures lack clarity. The way pupils' progress is reported to parents, particularly at Key Stage 3, is ambiguous.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have been ineffective in tackling the issue of poor attendance. Over the period of time since the last section 5 inspection, overall attendance figures have deteriorated and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains very high. Over 10% of pupils were absent during the two days of the inspection, with Year 9 attendance as low as 83%. This is a major concern and has an impact on safeguarding as well as the progress of pupils who are missing out on their education. Although there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who are late to the academy, this figure also remains very high.

Inspectors observed pupils behaving in a calm and mature manner at break and lunchtime. In most of the lessons observed, pupils showed respect to their teachers and each other, creating a positive atmosphere for learning. However, in a small number of lessons this was not the case, and the behaviour of some pupils prevented them and others in class from making progress. Not all teachers use the behaviour management system effectively. When pupils are given a class or departmental detention, they do not always attend.

While behaviour generally in lessons and around the academy has improved, of some concern is the rise in the number of reported racist and bullying incidents.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive principal has brought to the academy much-needed leadership skills, qualities and experience. Following the poor examination results in the summer, she is working closely with the head of school and other senior leaders to put in place strategies to tackle the urgent need for improvement.

The lack of impact of many of the actions already taken indicates that leaders across the academy have not been systematically monitoring and evaluating their work. Inspection evidence points to a lack of leadership cohesion and consistency. Consequently, systems and procedures are not sufficiently robust to ensure that they are having the desired impact.

This academy should be further along its journey towards the removal of special measures and leaders must work with a greater sense of urgency if this is to be achieved by the end of the year. For example, it is only in recent months that new appointments have been made to lead the development of pupils' literacy and

numeracy skills. These important areas are still not a high enough strategic priority for senior leaders, particularly considering the importance of literacy for pupils' success across the curriculum.

Discussions with the sponsors' representatives and the Chair of the Governing Body indicate that they have the expertise and resources to provide the required support and challenge to the academy, and will do so with the necessary urgency. In the words of one of the sponsor's representatives: 'Be assured, we will take action.'

External support

The local authority has invested considerable time and resources in supporting the academy and will continue to do so. The local authority officer has a strong relationship with the executive principal and sponsors, and she will continue to work closely with them to bring about improvement over the coming months.