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14 March 2019

Reverend Gilroy Brown  
Co-Principal  
King Solomon International Business School  
Lord Street  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B7 4AA

Dear Reverend Brown

**Special measures monitoring inspection of King Solomon International Business School**

Following my visit to your school on 26-27 February 2019, 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 that 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 that took place in May 2018.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

I strongly recommend that the school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in May 2018.**

- Improve the quality of teaching in key stage 3 so that, in all classes, pupils are offered the right level of challenge and support. Do this by:
  - making sure that teachers plan work more specifically for pupils who have the potential to reach or exceed age-related standards in English, mathematics and science
  - insisting that all teachers use assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress to plan work that is suitably matched to pupils' needs and abilities, retains their interest and extends their learning
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond fully to questions during class discussions in order to challenge them more effectively
  - building on the good practice that exists in some lessons where teachers and support staff vigilantly support pupils to remain on task when working independently and regularly correct errors and address misunderstandings.
  
- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in key stage 3 and sustain improvements to pupils' achievement in key stage 1 as they transfer into key stage 2. Do this by:
  - making sure that in all classes across key stage 3 pupils make more rapid progress and that pupils in Year 9 are better prepared for key stage 4
  - reducing more rapidly the difference between the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils compared with others who are not disadvantaged
  - improving, with greater urgency, the achievement of key stage 3 pupils in science
  - making sure that those pupils who are capable of reaching or exceeding age-related standards in English and mathematics in key stage 3 do so.
  
- Make sure that staff apply consistently the school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour during lessons in key stage 3 by:
  - ensuring that pupils develop positive attitudes to their work and thus improve their capacity to learn
  - applying more consistent approaches to modify and improve pupils' behaviour
  - reducing instances of persistent low-level disruption during lessons
  - continuing to reduce temporary and repeat exclusion rates.

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
  - consolidating and maintaining stable and secure senior leadership
  - building on the work being done by the strongest senior and middle leaders as the school continues to grow in size
  - making sure that leaders and governors evaluate more accurately the effectiveness of teaching and learning in order to address weaknesses and build on strengths
  - identifying the most important priorities for improvement in the school's strategic action plans, particularly those focusing on the quality of teaching
  - setting out in the school's short and long-term action plans clear measures of success, as well as stages and milestones, to help leaders and governors evaluate the impact of actions taken to bring about and sustain improvement
  - implementing more robust performance management and oversight of teaching and learning to eliminate weak teaching in key stage 3
  - ensuring that governors are more vigilant in holding leaders to account and have access to objective and accurate assessments of the school's work and progress.
- External reviews of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 26 February 2019 to 27 February 2019**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, other senior leaders, members of staff and the chair of the governing body. I met two groups of pupils, one primary and the other secondary. I met the school improvement partner for the primary phase and spoke by telephone to the school improvement partner for the secondary phase. I spoke to eight parents at the gate and took account of 117 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View.

### **Context**

A new principal has been appointed and will take up her duties from the beginning of the summer term. The current interim principal will step down in April 2019 after a period of transition. An interim head of primary was appointed in September 2018. This post was made permanent from the start of February 2019. A new designated lead for safeguarding was appointed in January 2019. A new head of science was appointed in September 2018. Fourteen new teaching appointments were made in September 2018, either to replace existing staff or because of the school's expansion, taking on Year 3 and Year 10 for the first time.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Under your leadership you have ensured stability with a secure senior leadership team. You have rightly tackled improving behaviour as a key priority along with improving or eradicating weak teaching. Parents spoken to were highly satisfied with your leadership and that of other leaders. Staff spoken to were fully committed to the vision and direction for the school under your leadership. However, both staff and parents expressed concerns that a further change of leadership would affect the sustainability of the improvements made.

Leaders are accurate in identifying where strengths and areas for development remain in teaching. They have a very ambitious target for most teaching to be good or outstanding by Easter 2019. There has been a significant turnover of staff in some classes in addition to a large number of new teaching staff required for the additional year groups as the school grows. Leaders have accurately identified where staff need additional support but there is at present very little outstanding teaching. As a result, there has not yet been enough sharing of best practice within the school.

The school's strategic action plan sets out in measurable steps the improvements required. Governors are able to see clearly from the plan where the school is on track and where further work is needed.

Following the review of governance, the governing body has been reconstituted. A number of members with a background or expertise in education have been recruited. The trust has established a scrutiny committee for governors to hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. Minutes seen from meetings held so far do not give a clear enough indication that governors are yet doing this for each year group, subject and pupil group. Not enough of the members of the scrutiny committee and full governing body attend meetings regularly.

There has been a significant turnover of leadership appointments made by the governors. For example, the new principal who is due to start this term will be the fourth appointment to this post since the school opened in 2015. The newly constituted governing body is ensuring that there is due care and diligence in the checks carried out for new appointments.

Despite the changes to governance which took effect in September 2018, some staff, some parents I spoke to and some who contacted Ofsted directly still hold mixed views about the effectiveness of the governing body. In particular, they were concerned about a lack of access to a parent governor or staff governor to express their views. Governors need to do more to regain the trust and confidence of the parents and staff, which have been seriously eroded.

The responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, were also very mixed. All parents spoken to at the gate were highly positive about your leadership and that of the recently appointed senior leaders, as were members of staff. They all commented on the significant improvement in pupils' behaviour. However, just over half of the parents who responded to Parent View did not agree that the school was well led and managed. Although the majority of respondents said they would recommend the school to another parent, two-fifths said they would not.

Leaders are not yet able to demonstrate that the use of additional funding is having enough impact on diminishing the difference in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils nationally. There is no evidence yet from the minutes of meetings that governors have scrutinised sufficiently the impact of the pupil premium funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The school conducted an external review of the effectiveness of pupil premium spending in October 2018, but at the time of the inspection the findings were not yet available. There is, however, now a named governor on the scrutiny committee with specific responsibility for the pupil premium.

Leaders have taken urgent steps to ensure that teachers' assessments are more accurate. This is in response to the key stage 1 results in 2018 in English, reading and mathematics, which were well below those anticipated. Consequently, assessments are more rigorous, and checks are made with other schools to ensure the accuracy of the assessments.

Uptake in Year 10 for the EBacc subjects is very low at 13%, well below the current

national average and the government's ambitious targets for the future. This is largely because very few pupils choose to study modern foreign languages.

At the time of the last inspection, safeguarding was judged as effective. There remains a culture in the school of leaders and all staff looking out for the welfare and safety of pupils. Pupils spoken to said they felt very safe in school and that bullying hardly ever happens. The large majority of parents responding to Parent View agreed that the school keeps their children safe.

There have been very recent changes in the leadership of safeguarding. The child-protection policy has been updated to take account of most of the requirements from the DfE's latest guidance. However, it does not take sufficient account of tackling peer-on-peer abuse. New leaders are not fully up to date with the requirements to be well trained in meeting the needs of children looked after (although there are none currently in the school), female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.

The school has not yet published information on its website about its curriculum offer in key stage 4 nor the content of subjects studied by pupils currently in Year 3 and Year 10. No careers information is published on the website. There is no link to further information about the trust because it does not have a website.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 3 and Year 10, especially in science and physical education (PE). In the best teaching, pupils are set appropriately challenging work linked to their starting points in order to achieve age-related standards in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn and remain engaged throughout their lessons.

In a PE lesson observed, for example, pupils were placed in three groups for their throwing skills in basketball, depending on their ability and previous attainment. Consequently, pupils who needed additional reinforcement with their learning were given extra support while others could move on to more advanced skills.

Where questioning is used effectively by teachers, questions of different levels of difficulty are targeted at specific pupils. Elsewhere, it is left to volunteers to answer. When this happens, teachers are unable to assess whether those who have not responded understand the work or not.

There is not yet enough opportunity for teachers to share the best practice with others. Therefore, there is still inconsistency in how effectively pupils work independently when adults are no longer supporting them.

Pupils are increasingly given the opportunity to discuss relevant topical issues in groups, such as equalities legislation and the role of women in the church, but the

extent to which this is accomplished varies from animated discussion of the task in hand to irrelevant chatter.

There are still too many instances where work is inappropriately pitched for all at too high a level of difficulty. Where this happens, it leads to some pupils not fully understanding the task and, in some instances, low-level disruption. In these situations, teachers are not taking sufficient account of pupils' starting points or ability in literacy to be able to access the text in front of them. There are also still some occasions in both the primary and secondary phases where pupils are given low-level tasks, such as copying, which do not engage their enthusiasm or interest.

In the primary phase, when pupils are on the carpet as a class recording their answers on a mini-whiteboard, teachers do not consistently check which pupils have got the answer wrong and need further practice before they move the class on to the next challenge. Where this occurs, additional adults are not deployed effectively enough to provide the necessary support. There are other times, however, when this is managed skilfully by teachers and support is deployed effectively, but the best practice is not yet shared throughout the school.

When additional adults are working with a group, the pupils remain focused on their task. However, at times when the adult moves on to work with another pupil or group, those unable to work unsupervised switch off and engage in low-level disruption.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Pupils, parents and staff all agree that behaviour has significantly improved since the current senior leaders have been in post. No serious incidents of misbehaviour were seen during the inspection visit, either in lessons or in the playground. Pupils spoken to said this is now typical and that behaviour is mostly good in most, but not all, subjects in key stage 3.

In lessons in key stage 3 and Year 10 most pupils are compliant and rely on being directed by teachers and other adults. Incidents of low-level disruption still occur in some lessons, including in English, French and religious education (RE). However, behaviour was of a high standard in secondary science and PE. For example, in a basketball session, most-able pupils were taking responsibility for leading others in their learning. Other pupils were able to manage their behaviour well, including when they were not directly supervised.

Similarly, in primary lessons pupils are mostly compliant and well behaved when sitting on the carpet and when working with adults at their tables. They mostly have positive attitudes to learning. When pupils are left on their own, however, some do not have the resilience to work independently. This sometimes leads to low-level disruption, including off-task chatter, playing with equipment or switching off.



There is a greater level of consistency in the way teachers set expectations and manage behaviour, especially now there is less reliance on cover staff. In most classes this is done well. However, there are still some exceptions where pupils are allowed to call out inappropriately in lessons and are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils spoken to were able to explain the procedures for sanctions clearly but felt there should be more rewards for good behaviour.

The school has introduced a new system for monitoring behaviour incidents by type, date, year group, subject and pupil group. As the system is in its infancy, it is too soon to evaluate whether there has been a fall in the number of recorded incidents.

The rate of fixed-term exclusions and repeat exclusions has fallen compared to last year. This is a result of better behaviour and successful strategies to re-engage pupils who have been excluded.

Only half of the parents responding to Parent View thought that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved. All of those spoken to at the gate confirmed that behaviour had improved significantly recently since the appointment of the interim principal and other senior leaders. All of those spoken to also agreed that the move from temporary accommodation into the new building has been a calming influence on the behaviour of pupils.

In 2018, the overall rate of absence was above the national average. Figures for this school year to date indicate that the rate of absence is increasing, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Persistent absence for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low, however. Leaders spoken to were unable to set out a coherent strategy to target specific individuals or groups of pupils where regular absence is a concern.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

There are no pupils yet in Years 6 or 11. Therefore, no external assessments and examinations have taken place at the end of key stages 2 and 4 since the school opened in 2015.

However, results in key stage 1 tests and assessments in 2018 were published after the last inspection. Outcomes were significantly below those anticipated by leaders. This was because of inaccurate assessments and previous weak teaching. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing was exceptionally low and very low in reading and mathematics compared to the national average. No pupils were working at greater depth in writing at the end of Year 2 and very few were doing so in reading or mathematics. Standards for disadvantaged pupils were equally low.

By contrast, the proportion achieving the expected standard in science by the end of Year 2 in 2018 was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of

pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 in 2018 was exactly in line with that of all pupils nationally. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in Reception, including in reading, writing and mathematics, was above the national average in 2018.

Based on the school's internal assessment information for pupils in key stage 3 and in Year 10, pupils have made significant improvements in their progress in science. Work seen in books confirms this. Leaders have made important appointments to ensure that improved specialist teaching now takes place. However, pupils do not yet have the opportunity to study three sciences at key stage 4.

The school's information indicates that pupils are on track towards attaining the age-related standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 9, although progress has not been as marked as it has been in science.

The progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils indicates that they are not yet sufficiently on track to diminish the difference in standards with all pupils nationally by the end of key stages 2 and 4.

The extent to which most-able pupils are on track to exceed the age-related expectations is more limited in English compared to mathematics.

### **External support**

Since the school was established, it has worked with two improvement partners (one each for primary and secondary) but this has not been consistent. At other times other consultants and external support have been engaged by the governing body. Both school improvement partners are continuing to work with the school. They both have an accurate view of the school and what it needs to do to improve. Their reports set out clearly what the school needs to do. They have previously had little input into advising on senior appointments made but they are now more secure about the rigour of the recruitment process.

### **Additional priorities for improvement**

- Leaders should secure significant improvements in standards by the end of key stage 1 in reading, mathematics and especially writing.
- The governing body should take action to engage more effectively with parents and staff to secure their trust and confidence.
- Leaders and governors should take a more strategic approach to improving attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and those for whom English is an additional language.

