



Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT

tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Mr Tahir Alam
Chair
Park View Educational Trust
Park View School: The Academy of Mathematics & Science
Naseby Road
Birmingham
B8 3HG

9 June 2014

Dear Mr Alam

Park View School: The Academy of Mathematics & Science

I am writing to you in your capacity as the chair of Park View Educational Trust ("the Trust") setting out the scale of my concerns about Park View School: The Academy of Mathematics & Science ("the Academy").

On 5-6 and 17-18 March 2014 Ofsted carried out a section 5 inspection of the Academy. In its report, a copy of which was sent to you on 20 May, it concluded that the Academy requires special measures, because although the achievement of pupils and quality of teaching is good, there are fundamental weaknesses in the governance and leadership of the Academy and in how it keeps its pupils safe. In addition, an investigation into the Trust by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) found evidence of numerous and serious breaches of the funding agreement and the Independent Schools Standards. Both reports are published today and they cause me grave concern.

In summary, the Ofsted report concludes that the governance of the Academy is inadequate and that it is not being led or managed appropriately; that leadership and management fail to instil confidence within the Academy; Governors have failed to ensure that safeguarding requirements and other statutory duties are met. Recruitment processes and promotion to key posts are not fair and transparent; the Academy is failing to keep children safe and secure.

Having considered these matters, the evidence gathered by Ofsted and its conclusion that the Academy requires special measures I have decided under clause 5.6 of the supplementary funding agreement for the Academy, to give written notice of the Secretary of State's intention to terminate that agreement. I set out below some particular examples from the Ofsted inspection.

The governance of the Academy

Ofsted rate governance in the Academy as inadequate.

The report describes that *'The governing body of Park View and the trust have not ensured that they are properly informed about the effectiveness of all aspects of academy life. They do no check with sufficient rigour that statutory duties, including safeguarding, are met'*

Furthermore, the reports describes that *"The lack of rigorous monitoring of academy life means that neither senior nor subject leaders can accurately evaluate and plan or take the right actions to bring about improvements"*.

Ofsted evidence shows that governors were unable to answer questions raised by inspectors on matters of finance, including the use of pupil premium and parity within staff pay. Ofsted evidence shows that several governors stated that they were out of date with what was going on in the Academy. Ofsted evidence states that staff reported that the Chair of Governors is heavily involved in every decision in the Academy.

Governors are not adequately checking safeguarding arrangements. Senior leaders undertook an audit in June 2013, which required a number of actions to be taken, but these were not tackled until shortly after the initial inspection visit on 5 and 6 March 2014.

Ofsted evidence states that a significant proportion of staff were critical of the leadership and governance said that there was favouritism, nepotism, inconsistencies in roles and a lack of equality in pay for the same role. Ofsted evidence states that staff said that the SLT posts of Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC) and Pupil Leadership coordinators had been created with the chosen candidates in mind.

Some staff reported to Ofsted that the grievance policy keeps changing without their being notified and feel that their complaints are ignored. Ofsted found that some staff feel intimidated and are fearful of speaking out.

Leadership and management

Ofsted has rated your leadership and management inadequate.

The Ofsted report goes onto list a significant number of failures of leadership and management:

- *Significant numbers of staff say they have no confidence in either the senior leaders or the governing body. They believe that the academy is poorly led and managed and that neither staff nor students are treated equally and fairly. Some staff were keen to share with inspectors their concern that recruitment practices were unfair. Others were very anxious about the possible consequences of expressing their views openly to inspectors.*
- *The acting principal and other leaders do not ensure equality of opportunity, nor do they know the extent to which equality is promoted by staff in the academy. For example, few students with special educational needs become prefects because many struggle to complete the written application form and no help is given to them.*
- *Leaders and managers have not ensured that safeguarding requirements are met or that statutory guidance is fully adhered to. Details of checks for staff not directly*

employed by the academy were only added to the single central register during the first inspection visit. The recruitment process, including for promotion, is opaque and is insufficiently monitored to ensure equality of opportunity.

- *The academy has developed systems for monitoring the achievement of both individuals and different groups of students, including those in alternative provision and those in receipt of free school meals. However, there is very little in-depth analysis of behaviour, rewards, exclusions, attendance, accidents and child protection data.*
- *The impact of pupil premium funding for different groups of students is not analysed effectively. It is measured against average outcomes at Key Stage 4 and not against the progress of other year groups across the academy.*
- *The academy's evaluation of its performance is superficial. It is focused on the academic outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 and is not linked sufficiently to different student groups or across other year groups. Information about students' progress, gained from monitoring of teaching, is not used well enough to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all students.*
- *The lack of rigorous monitoring of all aspects of academy life means that neither senior nor subject leaders can accurately evaluate and plan or take the right actions to bring about improvement.*

The Ofsted report states that, "Students' understanding of the arts, different cultures and other beliefs are limited. This together with their superficial understanding of how to stay safe and awareness of life in different parts of the United Kingdom mean that students are not well prepared for life in wider society".

The Ofsted report notes that "The current religious education programme in Years 7 and 8 enables students to develop limited understanding of different religions and cultures and how to stay safe. However, from Year 9 onwards students focus almost entirely on Islam, with very few opportunities to explore other religions and cultures. Inspectors were told that the academy has plans to change this."

The Ofsted report states that "The governing body has not ensured that systems are fair and transparent, including recruitment". Ofsted evidence states that teaching and support staff described in detail examples of unfair recruitment and appointment practices; many staff described others being appointed 'through the backdoor'; and lack of parity, fairness or transparency in appointments. Ofsted evidence states that the appointments of a vice principal, pupil leadership coordinator, SMSC coordinator and head of history were given as examples by several staff and that in each case the appointment of Muslim men was seen by staff as examples lacking fairness and transparency.

Ofsted reported female staff stating that there was no opportunity for promotion and that they did not feel valued or respected; that there was more respect for women who did not wear a headscarf and that there is belief that those who do should be more submissive. They also evidenced some staff stating that they were unhappy at the Academy; and that some staff had reported they had been "picked on" by senior leaders; and that some staff also reported they felt that favouritism impacts on all decisions

Behaviour and safety of children

Ofsted judge the behaviour and safety in the Academy as inadequate.

The Ofsted report states that *"The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate"*.

Students reported to Ofsted that *"incidents of bullying are rare and that is dealt with effectively when it does occur. However, their understanding of all different types of bullying and how to stay safe on the internet is very limited"*.

Ofsted evidence found that the single central register is in place, but no supply staff (of which there are many) are registered. Staff files and interview records are inconsistent as are safeguarding checks. Ofsted report that *"leaders and managers have not ensured that safeguarding requirements are met or that statutory guidance is fully adhered to. Details of checks for staff not directly employed by the academy were only added to the SCR during the inspection visit"*.

You have failed to ensure that all staff are trained in the use of the government's Prevent strategy and to raise students' awareness of the risks of extremism. The significant omissions in your Child Protection Policy, referenced in the Ofsted report, mean that these agendas, if they exist, can go unchecked.

Ofsted inspectors scrutinised the single central record of checks carried out on staff and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection. Their report concludes that:

- *"A significant number of staff had not received training in child protection when inspectors first arrived at the academy. Training has not been tailored to the particular safeguarding context of the students in this academy, such as awareness of forced marriage or the early signs of extremist behaviour.*
- *The academy's policy for child protection, revised between the first and last days of this inspection, has significant omissions. It does not promote a strong culture of safeguarding because:*
 - *expectations for the training of staff and designated persons are missing*
 - *details for dealing with allegations against staff do not reflect updated statutory guidance*
 - *the arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff at all levels of seniority are not stated adequately*
 - *no reference is made to any wider safeguarding issues such as forced marriage or to the use of 'Prevent' strategies to keep students safe*
 - *it is not clear how the policy will be reviewed and revised*
 - *the policy lacks detail about the role of the governing body in ensuring that safeguarding meets requirements"*

With regard to the use of Prevent strategies, the Ofsted evidence states that Academy documents record the visit of the speaker Sheikh Shady Al Suleiman and inspectors found that outside speakers present risks regarding extremism.

The Ofsted report states that *"Not all aspects of how to live a healthy lifestyle are covered. Students who have concerns about health issues, including sexual health, are*

not confident about who to turn to if they need to talk to someone. Not all staff are sufficiently trained to deal with concerns raised by student. These shortcomings compromise students' safety and well-being, both in and outside of the academy".

The Ofsted report states that *"Boys and girls are taught separately in religious education and personal development lessons. In a mixed-sex school this is a missed opportunity for girls and boys to share opinions and discuss together some important matters that are part of their daily lives"*. Ofsted inspectors visited lessons in textiles, Arabic, science and geography and evidenced boys and girls were sitting separately; in year 11 the registration group visited was single sex. They also stated that teachers tell students where to sit in lessons.

.Intention to terminate the funding agreement: special measures termination

Ofsted has determined that the Academy requires special measures. As set out in this letter Ofsted's report causes me grave concern. Accordingly, this letter is notice of the Secretary of State's intention to terminate the supplemental funding agreement for the Academy, in accordance with clause 5.6 of that agreement.

I invite you to make representations in response to this notice. For the purpose of clause 5.7 of the supplemental funding agreement, any representations you do wish to make must be received by me before 4 July 2014.

Independent School Standards

It is a requirement of the Academy being listed on the Register of Independent Schools, and therefore of entitlement to run an independent school, that you should comply with the Independent School Standards.

This letter also gives notice under section 165(3) of the Education Act 2002 identifying the following standards which you are failing to meet and requiring you to submit an action plan in accordance with section 165(4) before 4 July 2014.

Part 2 of Schedule 1 – Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils.

5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor—

(a) ensures that principles are promoted which—

(v) assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions

(vi) encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

I am clear that you are failing to meet this standard, based on the matters reported on by Ofsted as set out above in this letter.

Part 3 of Schedule 1 – Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

- (a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- (b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

I am clear that you are failing to meet this standard, based on the matters reported on by Ofsted as set out above in this letter.

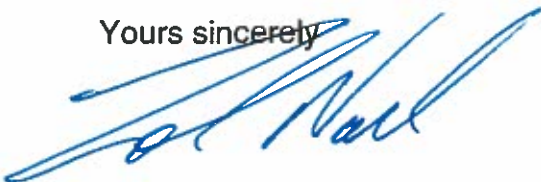
You should note that I reserve the right to impose further conditions on the Trust should other matters come to my attention.

I am deeply mindful of the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those sharing protected characteristics and those who do not share such characteristics (Equality Act 2010, section 149). Ensuring that the Trust meets the requirements and conditions set out in the funding agreement, as well as the standards for independent schools, positively promotes these aims.

Response

Your responses should be in writing, addressed to me, and a copy emailed to Colin Diamond (colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) before 4 July 2014.

Yours sincerely



LORD NASH