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9 February 2012

Miss Angela James
Head of School
Ecclesbourne Primary School
Atlee Close
Thornton Heath
Surrey
CR7 7FA

Dear Miss James,

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Ecclesbourne Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 February, for the time you gave to our telephone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Discussions with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and board of directors were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

The school joined the Pegasus Academy Trust on 1 April 2011. The work of the academy trust began in earnest from 1 September 2011 when the fixed-term contract of the headteacher ended and a new head of school was appointed from within the existing staff. She works under the direction of two executive headteachers who lead the academy trust which comprises Ecclesbourne Primary School, Whitehorse Manor Infant School and Whitehorse Manor Junior School. Other leadership roles have been reviewed and an assistant headteacher was appointed. Curriculum teams who lead subject areas are drawn from staff in all three schools. Three class teachers have left the school and have been replaced. The school is subject to a major building project due to end in April 2012. The school's local governing body monitors provision and outcomes. The board of directors has the strategic responsibility across the academy trust for monitoring provision and outcomes.

As a result of the inspection on 9 and 10 June 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The head of school and executive headteachers are ambitious for the school. Despite some challenges, including the building programme, staff morale is high and all are keen to improve matters. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Progress in addressing the areas of improvement from the previous inspection has accelerated since the academy trust took full responsibility for the work of the school. Consequently, teaching and progress for most pupils are improving. Detailed and ambitious development plans with measurable success criteria are driving improvement in the progress and attainment of pupils.

Results for the end of Key Stage 2 assessments in 2011 were significantly below average particularly in mathematics. Attainment in mathematics has improved and is now broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils enter the school typically with weak language skills and growing numbers of younger pupils are new to speaking English. This together with a legacy of weaker teaching has impacted on pupils' attainment in writing which is improving but below national expectations in many year groups. The presentation of pupils' writing has already improved and pupils now have greater opportunities to write across a range of subjects.

Teaching is improving particularly in Key Stage 1. However, it is not yet consistently good enough to secure good progress for all pupils, some of whom are under-attaining particularly in writing due to a legacy of weaker teaching. Regular and accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching, planning and pupils' work is securing improving provision. Weaknesses in teaching are addressed through effective professional development training and helpful feedback to teachers following lesson observations which importantly focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. However, teachers' targets for improvement are not routinely followed through to subsequent observations to ensure any weaknesses are quickly addressed.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 are motivated to learn through activities that stimulate their imagination including role play and class challenges. In some Key Stage 2 lessons, however, tasks often lack a real purpose or context and consequently pupils' motivation for learning is not as high.

Pupils' progress and attainment are tracked systematically and teachers are held to account for pupils' progress through regular review meetings. Strategies for improving the progress of individual pupils are identified and then evaluated for impact. In a Year 5 lesson more able pupils were applying their prior learning of co-ordinates to translate shapes. Through careful guidance and questioning, pupils were able to make links in new learning to that already acquired. The activities matched learners' needs well and challenged them to acquire new skills and knowledge. In some weaker lessons, however, assessments are not used well

enough to plan activities which precisely match learners' needs. Sometimes tasks are too challenging so that pupils cannot access them and in others they are too easy so that pupils do not move forward in their learning well enough. Additionally, assessment during some lessons is not used effectively to reshape activities to meet learners' emerging needs.

Time is sometimes lost when pupils complete tasks which do not contribute significantly to learning. Work is marked consistently but not enough feedback from teachers gives pupils developmental comments to move learning on. In most lessons additional adults are used effectively to promote learning. In the best examples teachers and assistants work as a teaching team to good effect. Pupils have greater opportunities to share their ideas through the use of paired talk which is used effectively in some lessons. However, in many lessons, pupils are too passive and not fully engaged throughout all parts of the lessons; this is more often the case for older pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who constitute almost a third of the school population make slower progress than their peers. Systems and procedures for supporting these pupils have been reviewed and are now more secure. Small group and individual learning programmes have been evaluated for impact and only those securing good progress have been retained. Individual reading with pupils is effective and almost all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in reading. Pupils talk confidently about books. They can name and discuss their favourite authors and say they would like more time to read in school. Training is underway to ensure that staff are well placed to deliver individual and group support where appropriate, including for those pupils with speech and language difficulties. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in the school.

Pupils say they enjoy school. The work of an independent welfare service has been very effective in improving attendance and punctuality. Attendance is currently high compared with the national average. This is as a result of clear expectations which are communicated to the whole school community, regular and rigorous monitoring of absence and a set of effective procedures when absence occurs. The work of the extended schools' coordinator has also contributed well to improving punctuality and attendance. For instance the early morning archery club encourages pupils to attend school punctually. Pupils are polite and friendly and lessons run smoothly. Pupils contribute to their own safety by walking around the school site calmly. They say they feel safe and are highly positive about their teachers who they describe as supportive.

The school's governing body and board of directors effectively hold the school to account particularly through its task groups which comprises school leaders, governors, directors and an independent chair. They review detailed achievement information and systematically monitor the school's progress in meeting targets in its appropriate statement of action. Members of the task group visit school to monitor

matters first hand, including the quality of marking. Safeguarding employment checks are completed and recorded carefully. The work of a learning consultant has supported improved leadership by verifying leaders' evaluation of lessons. Leaders focus clearly on the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make in lessons and this is contributing well to improving provision. Partnership work across the academy has been effective in improving leadership and provision including through its academy-wide curriculum teams.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011

- Accelerate pupils' progress swiftly and securely across all year groups in order to raise attainment securely above its present low levels, especially in mathematics.
- Eradicate inadequate teaching and rapidly improve teaching and learning so that the overall quality is at least good, by:
 - ensuring that work is matched sharply to pupils' differing needs and abilities
 - providing many opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their learning so that it is deepened and consolidated
 - giving lesson activities an appropriate context so that learning is consistently relevant and interesting
 - ensuring that time and resources are used to the full, including the deployment of teaching assistants
 - focusing observations of lessons as much on pupils' learning as on the quality of teaching, in order to focus staff on improving the impact of their work.
- Increase pupils' attendance so that all attend school regularly and gain the essential knowledge and skills to support their future economic well-being.