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Georgette Franklin
Acting Headteacher
Charter Primary School
Mitchell Avenue
Coventry
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Dear Mrs Franklin

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Charter Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 October 2012 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority representatives and the executive headteacher from the local school for coming to talk to me at such short notice.

Since the inspection in March 2012, four members of staff have joined the school and four have left, including the headteacher. An acting headteacher, formerly the deputy headteacher, has been leading the school with the support of an executive headteacher from a successful nearby school. There are future plans to strengthen these links by federating the two schools with a joint governing body. An acting deputy headteacher has also been promoted from within the school to take on additional roles. The number of pupils on roll have risen slightly in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to an increase in local population. More pupils join and leave the school during the year than average as there is surplus local social housing and many families move in and out of the area as their circumstances change. This provides the school with additional challenges. As part of this monitoring visit, the procedures for safeguarding children were checked and found to meet requirements.

As a result of the inspection on 13–14 March 2012, 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement has improved throughout the school since the last inspection, especially in literacy. This is because teachers have been making sure that pupils are reading and writing more each day and that they know what good writing looks like. Leaders and managers are checking more regularly that pupils are making much quicker progress and making sure that more of the teaching is good or better. As a result, in 2012, the test marks of Year 2 and Year 6 in both English and mathematics were the highest they have ever been in the history of the school. These test results are improving each year and are nearly the same as the national average.

School data from this inspection confirms that all pupils continue to make good progress. Teaching pupils how to sound out words and reading to another adult or an older pupil has become a more regular activity across the school. Extra government funding (the pupil premium) has been used well to part-fund a Reading Recovery teacher who helps weaker readers with one-to-one or small-group support. This teacher has trained some of the other adults in the school to work with weak readers as well. As a result, the reading of these pupils has improved and they are catching up with their classmates. The weakest Year 2 readers are now able to sound out new words using the initial letter sound of words and can say the sounds that groups of letters make. They are able to spell words with much more confidence due to regular spelling tests, and now that teachers correct misspelt words when marking pupils' work. Older children read with more fluency and enthusiasm, many saying that they now read more at home, especially when their parents read as well. It is clear in their work books, in a range of subjects, that pupils are writing more and trying harder with their handwriting. Teachers are marking pupils' work more often and making useful suggestions to pupils that show them how they can improve their next piece of work.

The quality of teaching has improved. The school judges that around three-quarters of the teaching is now good or better, an improvement since the last inspection in March 2012. This is because some local authority staff have worked with teachers, and also because teachers in the school are helping each other. There is less teacher talk in lessons and more time planned for the pupils to get on with their work on their own, in pairs, or helped by a teaching assistant. Across the school, teaching is more consistent, although there is still work to do to make all the teaching good or better, especially in the way teachers challenge all pupils to respond to questions. The best teachers are sharing their skills with other colleagues, for example by helping each other to plan, deliver and review parts of their lessons. This strategy is working well.

The last inspection reported that some of the behaviour in the playground lacked consideration for others, especially when pupils were playing ball games. The acting headteacher made sure that this quickly improved. Now behaviour is much calmer in all areas of the school and playground. Pupils are sensible, polite and courteous to visitors. Their attendance at school has improved too. The learning mentor has done a good job contacting parents and making sure that pupils come to school.

For the past few years, the school has received a lot of support from the local authority. The new acting headteacher, with the support of the executive headteacher, is improving the school quickly. Together, they have been successful in improving pupils' test marks in literacy while still working hard with mathematics. They do more checks now, often two managers working together looking at teaching and pupils' work in their books to agree that every pupil is making the progress they should be. Those pupils who fall behind with their work are quickly noticed through the half-termly pupil-progress meetings with each class teacher. These pupils are then well supported by catch-up programmes with another adult, funded by the pupil premium. The governors make sure that this extra money is used well.

Since the previous inspection, local authority support has been well targeted at the key issues from the last inspection. This has included checks and challenges every half-term by local authority consultants, senior officers, the School Improvement Partner and the education improvement adviser. Their support has been effective in leading staff training sessions and supporting the new acting headteacher. Their statement of action and action plan are fit for purpose, detailed and thorough, although they do not contain enough measurable targets to aim for each term. For example, how much of the teaching is going to be good or better by the end of this term? How much is going to be good or better by the end of the spring term 2013, and so on? Learning consultants have worked with individual teachers and delivered some quality in-service training for the whole staff. The school leadership has now become confident to take on more of this training for themselves with less help from the local authority. The link adviser has provided good challenge for the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body in supporting the action plan with milestones to be able to check which things are working well and which are not. The appointment of an acting deputy headteacher from within the school has significantly strengthened the leadership and management of the school.

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

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- Ensure that from their starting points in Year 1, pupils make better progress than all pupils nationally in reading and writing to bring attainment in line with national averages by:
 - making sure that pupils' early reading skills are secure by the end of Key Stage 1
 - raising expectations for pupils to write independently and at length across the curriculum.

- Increase the proportions of good and better teaching in lessons to at least 70% by:
 - reducing the time spent on introductions in lessons to give pupils more time to complete written tasks
 - ensuring that assessment information is used to plan and set tasks that fully challenge all groups of pupils, especially the most able
 - improving the consistency of marking so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels provide a concerted approach to raising attainment in literacy while sustaining improvement in mathematics by:
 - focusing relentlessly on improving the teaching of literacy and measuring its impact on learning
 - embedding recently introduced strategies to extend and consolidate pupils' literacy skills
 - ensuring that all staff use data to set ambitious targets for pupils' achievement
 - sharing the best practice in the teaching of literacy to develop the skills of others.