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20 November 2012

Mr Rod Dickson  
Executive Headteacher  
The Bentley Federation  
King Charles Primary School  
Wilkes Avenue  
Walsall  
WS2 0JN

Dear Mr Dickson

### **Requires improvement first monitoring inspection visit of King Charles Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the Principal of the Federation, the acting head of school, the Chair and a representative of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. The school action plans were evaluated.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to staff or governors since the inspection, with the exception of the appointment of a teaching assistant to oversee reading support in Years 3, 4 and 5.

### **Main findings**

The school has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement. The system for tracking pupils' progress is used to identify how

well pupils are achieving and pick up on any variations between different groups of pupils, for example those eligible for additional government funding.

Staff have been set challenging targets relating to the progress pupils are expected to make in reading, writing and mathematics. These targets are in turn linked to the way in which the school checks how well teachers perform. The action plan covers the appropriate areas for improvement but criteria to see how well the school is succeeding do not include enough detail to enable governors to keep a check on progress. Neither does the action plan identify how improvements to the quality of teaching will be evaluated.

There is now an overview of the monitoring which will take place and how it will be undertaken. This includes members of the governing body working alongside staff. English is led by the acting head of school and the Principal oversees mathematics across both schools. There are limited opportunities for other staff to take on a leadership role.

Governors are aware of the need to give greater challenge to the school. They do not have the necessary expertise to analyse information to see if the school is successful in raising achievement. At present the instruments of governance for the federation have not been agreed with the Governing Body and the local authority.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- Strengthen the success criteria within the school's action plans so they give clear outcomes which can be evaluated. Identify specific points in time when progress against each activity will be checked.
- Extend opportunities to monitor of the quality of teaching to more staff.
- Finalise the instruments of governance for the federation as a matter of urgency.

The HMI will make a further visit to support school leaders in evaluating teaching through joint lesson observations. Also, after the review of the governing body planned by the local authority, holding a meeting to explain how governors can interpret data and better challenge senior leaders on the progress of pupils and hold the school to account for its use of pupil premium money.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has introduced a partnership review group to determine the effectiveness of the federation. It plans to undertake an evaluation of the Governing

Body and to act upon the outcome to provide further support. The local authority has provided support to the school to improve the accuracy of assessments so that information to track the progress of pupils is more exact. The local authority have also ensured that the performance management of the Principal is completed. The school has identified suitable consultants to help them bring about the necessary improvements.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**