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26 April 2013

Mr Jarlath Madine  
The Principal  
Dame Janet Primary Academy  
Newington Road  
Ramsgate  
Kent  
CT12 6QY

Dear Mr Madine

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Dame Janet Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Lesley Cox, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 24 and 25 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because one of the academy's predecessor schools was judged to be a school causing concern.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the executive headteacher and representatives from The Kemnal Academies Trust. Inspectors spoke with pupils, listened to them read and looked at their work. Inspectors observed 18 lessons covering all year groups, including the Nursery. Eight of the observations were conducted jointly with you.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is not making enough progress in raising standards for all pupils.

### **Context**

Dame Janet Primary Academy opened on 1 December 2012 as a member of The Kemnal Academies Trust and The Attwood Foundation. It was formed with the amalgamation of Dame Janet Community Infant and Junior Schools. The academy is

on the two adjacent sites of these predecessor schools. You were appointed as the principal designate on 1 August 2012 and assumed day-to-day leadership responsibility when the academy opened. All staff from the predecessor schools transferred to the academy. A local governing body with a membership of seven governors has been established. There are two vacancies. An executive headteacher oversees the work of the academy and four other primary academies in the area on behalf of the trust.

There are 618 pupils on roll, which is more than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in each year group and a Nursery. Just over 40% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is higher than the national average. The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus are also above average.

### **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils throughout the academy are low. A legacy of underachievement has not been tackled with sufficient rigour or urgency. As a result, pupils are not making enough progress to close the gaps in their knowledge and skills to reach the levels expected for their age. Consequently, they are ill prepared for the next stage of their learning.

The accuracy of information about the attainment and progress of pupils in each class and subject has not been checked thoroughly or quickly enough and is unreliable. As a consequence, leaders do not know whether pupils are making faster progress to catch up since the academy opened. A new system to record the attainment and progress of each pupil has been recently introduced, but its usefulness is undermined by the unreliability of the data being used. Information is not analysed systematically or in enough detail to make sure that actions are targeted precisely where they are needed most and are making a difference.

In lessons, too many pupils were seen making little or no progress because activities lacked a clear focus or were not matched to what pupils already knew and what they needed to learn next. Work seen in pupils' books showed too few were making sufficient improvements in their basic mathematics and writing skills. While some pupils read fluently, and with obvious enjoyment, others are unable to use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make to read unfamiliar words. Poor reading skills are limiting the pleasure these pupils get from books and hindering their progress in other subjects.

Additional support and resources are provided for pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, the academy is unclear about the difference being made to the achievement of these groups of pupils. Furthermore, work seen in books and learning observed in lessons show that, like other pupils in the academy, these pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

## **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is not improving quickly enough to accelerate the progress that pupils make. Too many lessons are inadequate and there is not enough consistently good teaching across the academy to raise standards. Teaching in the Early Years Foundations Stage and Year 1 is weak.

In the few good lessons seen, teachers used probing questions to deepen pupils' thinking. They gave useful, timely feedback to develop pupils' understanding. The lessons were purposeful and well organised so engaged all of the pupils effectively. Activities were well matched to pupils' different abilities. Additional adults knew precisely what was expected of them and the pupils they were working with. In these lessons pupils made good learning gains.

A new approach to structuring lessons has been recently introduced to improve teaching. However, too few teachers have the skills to implement the approach effectively. They do not fully understand what pupils already know or when they are ready to move on to the next steps. In most lessons seen teachers did not check carefully how well all pupils were learning, particularly those who were working on their own. Consequently, errors and misconceptions were not spotted and corrected quickly. Pupils who could not read instructions or the worksheet they were given went unnoticed for too long. Pupils who had understood the task or were not sufficiently challenged to keep them working productively became restless or distracted. As a result, the pace of learning was too slow and expectations of the quantity and quality of work to be produced were unclear or too low.

Practical activities are planned using a range of resources, including computers, in most lessons. They are not always selected with a clear learning focus or managed well which hinders pupils' progress. In a guided reading lesson a group of pupils was playing scrabble for too long so lost focus and wasted valuable learning time. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, routines are not in place to help children select activities, so they flit from one to another gaining little. Learning opportunities were missed to develop children's language and mathematical learning skills when involved in messy play tasks.

The quality of marking in pupils' books is inconsistent. Comments offer praise but do not help pupils know how to move to the next level of learning. When comments are offered they are not followed up to make sure pupils have acted on the advice. Marking seen in guided reading work books was poor, with little more than ticks or crosses.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe and free from bullying. If any occurs they are confident that it is dealt with. They think the changes that are

being made, including how behaviour is managed, are generally for the better. They know what is expected of their behaviour and the consequences of any that does not meet these expectations. Most behave appropriately, are polite and move around the academy in an orderly manner. Approaches to managing behaviour are not used consistently in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 so pupils were seen off task and not using their learning time well. Incidents seen of poor behaviour and pupils off task were linked to the quality of teaching and less often in the more effective lessons.

Exclusion rates are well above the national average, particularly among the younger pupils, and there has been little change since the academy opened. Systematic arrangements to help reduce the repeat exclusions of pupils for the same type of behaviour have not been established.

Attendance has improved but remains below the national average for primary schools. Levels of absence are higher among the younger pupils. The work of the family liaison officer, celebration assemblies, regular feedback on attendance in newsletters, and the use of fixed penalty fines when necessary, have been effective in improving the attendance of some pupils.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the academy**

Leaders at all levels have not acted with sufficient urgency or rigour to bring about the improvements needed in teaching and learning. Time has been lost, including in the transition to an academy, because there has been a lack of clarity about the improvements expected by you, the trust, governors and the executive headteacher within a clearly defined timeframe.

The absence of an improvement plan which specifies the key priorities, quantifiable targets and details how, when and by whom progress towards these targets is going to be measured has been a serious omission. Arrangements for governors and the trust to hold senior staff to account for improving teaching and raising standards have been weak and hindered by the lack of such a plan.

Information about strengths and weaknesses in teaching, as well as the accuracy of pupil performance information, was not validated quickly enough when the academy opened. Consequently, leaders have no clear baseline against which to hold staff accountable for accelerating pupils' progress. The monitoring of teaching lacks rigour, so leaders do not know whether improvements have been made and if pupils are learning more effectively. Incisive actions to tackle inadequate teaching and address underperformance have been lacking. The restructuring of the senior leadership team is not yet complete. The expectation has been that the new structure will be implemented in September. This is too slow. Responsibilities for driving improvements in each year group and in English and mathematics have been delegated to middle leaders but they do not yet have the leaderships skills needed to fulfil their responsibilities quickly and effectively.

The trust has set targets for you to achieve by which they will judge your effectiveness, but other staff do not know precisely what is expected of them. Their performance targets have not been updated since before the academy opened so they do not know how they will be held accountable for the improvements that are needed to raise standards for all pupils.

Lines of accountability and reporting arrangements between the senior leaders, governing body and the trust have been ineffective. Robust actions are now being taken by the trust to put this right. The roles of the trust and the governing body are being changed and strengthened so that the trust can more frequently and directly monitor performance and challenge where it falls short of what is necessary.

### **External support**

The trust has a comprehensive programme of training and support which is offered to the academy. Some academy staff have participated in leadership training and an improving teacher course. Newly qualified teachers have participated in specific training. An advanced skills teacher has provided Year 1 with support for lesson planning. The academy shares training with the other local primary trust schools, supported by the executive headteacher. However, external support has made little difference to improving teaching and learning because it has not been targeted where it has been needed most. Nor have checks been made to ensure that what has been learned has been put into practice or advice acted on.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and pupils make faster progress by:
  - taking robust and timely action to eradicate inadequate lessons quickly
  - ensuring teachers check how well all pupils are learning in lessons to correct errors and make sure all pupils are using their time well
  - teachers asking probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding
  - letting pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve to the next level of learning
  - developing teachers' subject knowledge so teachers can adapt their lessons to move pupils on as soon as they are ready.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels and build the capacity to improve by:
  - recruiting skilful senior leaders as a matter of urgency
  - developing the skills of middle leaders
  - managing performance systematically so that all staff know they will be held accountable for pupils' progress
  - sharpening monitoring and reporting arrangements between academy leaders, governors and the trust
  - establishing and sharing a detailed plan for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**