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Mr Simon Waltham  
Headteacher  
Cann Hall Primary School  
Constable Avenue  
Clacton-on-Sea  
CO16 8DA

22 May 2013

Dear Mr Waltham

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Cann Hall Primary School**

Following my visit with Isobel Randall Additional Inspector to your academy on 20 and 21 May 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 the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and deputy headteacher, three groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the chair of the directors of the academy partnership, teachers and teaching assistants.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

### **Context**

Cann Hall Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of

pupils supported through school action is similar to the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and with statements for special educational needs is well above the national average for other primary schools.

In November 2012, an academy was established as a partnership between Cann Hall and Notley Green Primary School, a successful school in another part of Essex. An executive headteacher has overall responsibility for both schools and governors from both schools serve as directors of the partnership. The day-to-day leadership of the school is under the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Since the formation of the partnership, staffing has been stable. Few pupils leave or join the school other than at the usual time.

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

Since the creation of the academy, standards have risen but are still below the national average at the end of Year 6. However, the gap is closing rapidly. The school is using information about pupils' progress to identify gaps in learning and, armed with this information, teachers and support staff are working effectively to speed up pupils' progress. An additional teacher has been employed, as a result of extra funding from the government (the pupil premium), to support lower attaining pupils in Year 6. In lessons pupils are often making good progress in English and mathematics, but pupils have brought to the academy a legacy of underachievement which is taking time to address fully. In Year 1, this is a particular problem because pupils have not had a positive Early Years Foundation Stage experience. As a result, teachers are having to work especially hard to help pupils to catch up. Children's progress in the Early Years since the creation of the academy has accelerated and is now good. Parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were overwhelmingly positive regarding their children's progress.

### **The quality of teaching**

Most teaching is good. Teachers usually plan well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. They use a range of strategies to enable all pupils to make good progress. Teachers usually check frequently how well pupils are doing as the lesson goes on and change what they planned to do, if necessary, in response to this checking. Interesting and varied activities maintain pupils' attention. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons, especially mathematics. There is well-organised collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants to meet the needs of different pupils through, for example, questions that make pupils think about what they have learned.

Teachers usually manage behaviour well and have high expectations of pupils. As a result, the atmosphere for learning is very positive. Pupils respond well to the marking that shows them where they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils know their targets and respond to them so that

improvement shows in later work. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the success with which newly introduced strategies are applied across the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in most classes and around the school is good. In a few lessons, teachers have to work hard to manage behaviour because pupils in some classes started at the academy without having gained sufficient understanding of the behaviour needed for learning to take place. In most lessons, learning is helped by pupils co-operating really well together. Relationships between adults and pupils are highly positive. In assemblies, the success of pupils is greeted with genuine enthusiasm by staff and pupils alike. There is a real atmosphere of excitement as teachers explain why pupils have been recommended for awards. Assemblies very effectively aid pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At break and at lunch time pupils get on well together. Members of the school council suggested a 'helpful friends' scheme and pupils are keen to be trained. Pupils told inspectors that bullying has been effectively dealt with and is now rare. Parents and carers responding to the on-line questionnaire were exceptionally positive regarding pupils' behaviour and safety. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They are punctual to lessons. Attendance is similar to that found in other schools, but could be better if the school took a less relaxed attitude to parents and carers taking pupils out of school for term-time holidays.

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

The impact of the school's effective leadership and management can be seen in the improvements that have taken place under the direction of the current team. The quality of teaching has improved so that most lessons are now good. This has been the result of good professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, sharing of good practice, the rigorous monitoring of the quality of lessons, the use of information on pupil progress to challenge teachers and, where necessary, robust action to remove teachers who were unable to improve sufficiently. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development. They recognise that, while the school has improved enormously, it is not yet good because of some variability in the quality of teaching resulting in some inconsistency in the rate of pupils' progress.

Leaders have drawn on external expertise to support and raise the quality of teaching, to improve the reliability of special educational needs assessment, and to provide objective checks on how well the school is doing. Improvement planning is effective and the academy has correctly identified and acted on key priorities. Teachers say that teamwork is central to the school; for example, training of teachers of older year groups by teachers of younger classes in the linking of letters and sounds (phonics).

The executive headteacher has used her experience effectively to coach and train senior leaders. The school and the partnership have an expert group of governors and directors who provide effective challenge. Middle leaders are playing an

increasingly effective role in leading improvements in their areas of responsibility. Teachers and teaching assistants have time together to plan and the positive impact of this is seen in successful partnership work in lessons. The strong quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's leadership in driving change. It establishes a positive learning culture from day one.

### **External support**

There has been good partnership working which has included staff from this and the partner school spending two training days together. Examples of how the partnership is working well include the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) from the partner school working with the Cann Hall SENCo twice a week. She supports the applications and associated paperwork for statements of special educational needs. Other examples include the use of two advanced skills teachers from the partner school to support teachers in improving from 'Good to Great' and to lead professional development meetings. The assistant headteacher of the partner school is supporting staff in the use of spellings and phonics. The governing bodies of each school work together. The local authority continues to carry out regular 'stocktake days' to validate senior leaders' judgements on the Ofsted priorities set for the predecessor school.

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

Adrian Lyons  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**