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25 September 2013

Linda Chesworth  
Executive Headteacher  
R A Butler Academy Infant School  
South Road  
CB11 3DG

Dear Ms Chesworth

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to R A Butler Academy Infant School**

Following my visit to your academy on 25 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of marking and feedback that pupils receive about how to improve their work.
- Complete the external review of the governing body that is already underway and implement its recommendations.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, four members of the governing body, and an external consultant, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. You accompanied me on a tour of the school when we visited all classes. I evaluated documentation, including assessment information and the

academy's action plans. I looked at a sample of pupils' written work from all classes to evaluate the quality of teachers' marking.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection you have been appointed as executive head teacher to lead both the infant and junior academies. The acting headteacher has resumed her substantive role as deputy. Two teachers left the academy in July and have been replaced. A new assistant headteacher working across the infant and junior academies has joined the senior leadership team. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is new to the role. The governing bodies of the infant and junior academies have merged as one.

The academy's community is coming to terms with the recent loss of one of its teachers who was a 'champion for change'.

## **Main findings**

The academy has made important changes to the way that it works since the inspection. Pupils' learning lies at the heart of your planning. You and the deputy headteacher have accurately identified the most pressing issues and have developed an effective plan to move the school forward rapidly. Your action plan focuses on the right things. It prioritises improved achievement for pupils and sets out a clear route to success. You have introduced a very systematic way of checking that your action plan is working. Weekly monitoring schedules are in place, and all staff understand their role in making sure that the actions are achieved. Paperwork is useful, detailed and it is kept up to date.

The impact of your plan is already being seen. Pupils' attainment was significantly better by the end of July 2013 than it was in the previous year. Staff understand your high expectations because you have communicated them well: there is no room for misinterpretation or allowances made if they are not met. The leadership team has developed assessment systems that enable all staff to see at a glance how individual pupils are doing. Teachers have received training in these systems and they are using the information to plan lessons which are more closely matched to pupils' abilities. The way that pupils' work is marked, and the feedback that they receive, has been overhauled. The new approach has been adopted across the school but there is more to do to make sure that the quality of the marking and feedback is consistent.

You have made significant changes to the way that teaching assistants work. These are appropriate, and mean that teaching assistants are better deployed in lessons. Their time is spent with different groups, and pupils are less reliant on teaching assistants for support where their independence can be encouraged.

Governance has arranged for an external review of its workings. This has begun and it is important that the findings are implemented quickly. The governing body has independently recognised that there are areas where it can improve the way that it works. Three governors have been closely involved with the action plan, and are scheduled to work with senior leaders to monitor the progress that the school has made.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The academy has commissioned an external consultant to support their improvement to work alongside senior leaders. The support provided has contributed to the schools strong systems to check on its performance and gather information about pupils' achievement. The consultant has an accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas where additional support is needed. The academy benefits from close working with the junior academy.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**