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Jan Pennington
The Primrose Centre
Throne Road
Rowley Regis
B65 9JP

Dear Mrs Pennington

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Primrose Centre

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and managers are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and with the Chair of the Management Committee to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority to discuss the support being provided to the school. The school action plan was evaluated and I considered examples of your records from the monitoring of teaching and learning. I briefly visited classrooms and spoke to a small group of pupils.

Context

At the time of the inspection, the role of deputy headteacher was shared by the two class teachers. Since the inspection, one of the two teachers has left the school. The remaining teacher has been appointed as full time deputy headteacher. A temporary teacher has joined the staff until a permanent appointment can be made.

Main findings

You and the management committee have responded quickly to the findings of the recent inspection. You have a clear understanding of what needs to be done for the school to be judged as good. Your action plan covers all the areas for improvement mentioned in the inspection report and contains detailed information about the steps you intend to take to make these improvements.

Since the inspection you have improved your systems for checking on the work of teachers. You observe lessons regularly and now make more frequent checks on teachers' planning and on the work in pupils' books. Your visits to classrooms and checks on pupils' work should now become more focused on the impact of what teachers are doing and saying on pupils' learning and progress. You and the deputy headteacher are providing training and support to the new temporary teacher to ensure that lessons provide suitable challenge for pupils of all abilities.

In addition to regular informal discussions, you now meet with teachers every half term to discuss the progress of each pupil. This approach is helping you to quickly identify any pupils who are not making good progress and provide additional teaching and support. You have also collected information about the additional support provided to individuals and groups of pupils, so that leaders and the management committee can evaluate the success of this provision.

School leaders have developed a clear and positive way of managing pupils' behaviour. A consistent approach is shared by staff and visual reminders are evident in both classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and make good choices about their actions and language. Clear records of behaviour are kept for each pupil and you monitor these regularly. You are working with the local authority to further improve your recording systems so that you can measure and evaluate the success of the school's work in helping pupils to manage their own behaviour.

Overall attendance is well below the national average. However, the majority of pupils attend school regularly. The small number of pupils on roll means that the poor attendance of a few pupils can impact considerably on overall attendance figures. The school provides transport for pupils each day. You promote and celebrate good attendance and since the inspection you have introduced attendance awards for pupils who attend school every day. Absences are always followed up and parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance.

Although the current management committee has been in place for less than a year, it has a very clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Three members of the committee have extensive experience in school leadership and so are knowledgeable and skilled in evaluating teaching and learning. The management committee is providing a good level of challenge and support to

the school and shares the school leaders' determination that the school quickly becomes good. They understand that the permanent appointment of an effective teacher is essential, in order to secure good teaching for all pupils.

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

External support

The school improvement adviser provides effective support for the school. She makes regular visits and collects first hand evidence about the progress the school is making, for example by looking at pupils' books and observing lessons. The adviser has a good understanding of the areas which require improvement and is working closely with the headteacher and the management committee to ensure that the necessary improvements are made.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Sandwell.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector