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18 June 2014

Mrs S Manzi  
Headteacher  
East Wickham Primary Academy  
Wickham Street  
Welling  
DA16 3BP

Dear Mrs Manzi

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to East Wickham Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 18 June 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 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 March 2014. 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:

- check more frequently that actions taken to bring about improvements have the intended impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of teachers, and a representative of The Kemnal Academies Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and had a telephone conversation with the Chair of Governors. I joined you on a short tour of the academy and evaluated the academy's action plan.

I looked at examples of work in pupils' literacy and mathematics books, with you and another senior leader.

## **Context**

Since the inspection there have been no changes to the academy's staffing. At the end of the summer term six teachers will be leaving the academy. Five teachers have been appointed and one will be returning from maternity leave.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, leaders have acted quickly to tackle the areas identified for improvement. The school's action plan is detailed and focused on key priorities. It lays out clearly the actions needed to bring about rapid improvement.

Leaders have reviewed the systems they use to collect and analyse information about pupils' progress. They now gather information more frequently so that it is more up-to-date. Leaders consider the progress that pupils have made over time, rather than within a particular year. This gives leaders a more accurate picture of the proportions of pupils on-track to make expected, or more than expected progress. Teachers use this information to rapidly identify and support any pupils who need to catch up. Leaders check the progress of groups of pupils, for example, those who speak English as an additional language and those entitled to free school meals.

Leaders' expectations of teachers' marking are now more consistent throughout the academy. Pupils reflect on their work and colour code it to indicate their level of understanding. Teachers' comments identify the next step in pupils' learning. There has been an improvement in pupils' responses to the comments teachers make. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils respond urgently enough to this advice in order to bring about rapid progress.

New resources to support the teaching of reading have been purchased. It is too early to assess the impact of these new books on pupils' achievement. However, teachers report that pupils are more engaged and look forward to reading the next book in a series. Leaders have begun planning for the introduction of the new National Curriculum in September 2014. They have identified what they expect of pupils' vocabulary, grammar and punctuation in each year group.

Leaders have carried out an audit to assess staff knowledge and understanding of the teaching of the various elements of the mathematics curriculum. Training has been provided for teaching assistants so that they can lead groups more effectively. A teacher with specialist mathematics training has provided support for her colleagues in the teaching of the application of mathematical skills. She also checks

that pupils who have received additional support continue to build on the progress they have made.

Governors now look in more detail at information about pupils' progress. They have begun to ask academy leaders more challenging questions about the performance of different groups of pupils. However, the frequency of governor meetings and delays in receiving the minutes limits the impact of their work. An external review of governance has been completed and plans to act on the recommendations are in place. Several governors have attended training to increase their knowledge and understanding of their roles. Governors have also received training from academy leaders about the systems used to analyse information about pupils' progress. Governors and academy leaders have made arrangements for middle leaders from Key Stages 1 and 2 to work together more closely from September 2014.

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**

A Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) from the Bexley Teaching School Alliance has worked with the mathematics subject leader. Together they have visited lessons to assess strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching. This is helping to set priorities for teachers' training. The SLE has also provided support to middle leaders in the use of information about pupils' progress.

The Kemnal Academies Trust has provided training for teachers in the use of questioning during lessons and about the marking of pupils' work. They have also provided support for teachers to plan work which provides the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Staff are positive about this support to improve their practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bexley and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes  
**Seconded Inspector**