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9 July 2014

Ms Lucy Gough
Headteacher
St Barnabas CofE Primary Academy
Parkhouse Street
Openshaw
Manchester
M11 2JX

Dear Ms Gough

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Barnabas CofE Primary Academy, Manchester

Following my visit to your academy on 8 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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:

■ ensure that:

- the academy's post Ofsted action plan makes clear the intended impact of each action on the achievement of specific groups of pupils, particularly of those who have a disability or special educational needs, those supported by the pupil premium funding and the most able
- all teachers and their assistants use assessment information consistently well to focus sharply on improving the achievement of the above key groups across all measures of progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of Governors and other members of the Governing Body, as well as with a local authority officer and a quality assurance advisor, to discuss the action you have taken since the last inspection. A wide range of documents was considered during the visit and the 'post Ofsted action plan' was evaluated. Records of the outcomes of monitoring activities, of the impact of performance management and of meetings of the Governing Body were also examined. I made brief visits to all classes, during which I looked at the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour. I also met with a group of seven pupils from different year groups to listen to their views. I also considered the 11 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Context

In recent years, the school has been through considerable staffing instability but this has now been resolved. No new staff have joined the school since the time of the last inspection, although there have been some adjustments to senior and middle management roles and responsibilities.

Main findings

You, senior leaders and governors share a very clear vision of what the academy needs to do in order to become good. You are all enthusiastic and fully committed to the school's improvement. In the short time since the last inspection you have set in place a range of measures to begin to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, you have implemented a sharper system for tracking pupils' progress and meetings at which teaching staff are held more closely to account for their pupils' achievement.

You have refined the procedures for performance management so that it is now tightly linked to the Teachers' Standards and to prescribed continuing professional development to support teachers who are not yet good. You have been unafraid to move teachers on when their practice has failed to improve.

The systematic approach that you and senior leaders have adopted in improving the academy is much appreciated by staff who are in charge of subjects or other aspects of the academy's work. Some of these leaders are new to their roles and are effectively supported and challenged to carry out their responsibilities. Nevertheless you are aware, through your own systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning, that the full impact of the positive changes you have made is not yet fully evident in the achievement of some groups of pupils across year groups and subjects.

During my visit pupils' behaviour was very positive and courteous. They visibly enjoy their learning and this is confirmed by their high rates of attendance. Pupils

participate well in activities, work well together and show confidence and maturity in speaking with visiting adults.

You are currently well supported by the Governing Body, whose members are very well informed about educational matters and the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They share with you a very deeply held commitment to improving the life chances of the pupils and their community. This is evident in your energetic work to involve parents more fully in the academy's work. Governors show good capacity to help you to drive the academy forward and have further increased it by undertaking an audit of their skills and an external review of their practice.

The 'post Ofsted action plan' is fit for purpose, being very thorough and detailed, with appropriate timescales and generally clear measures of success. The plan therefore sets a clear agenda for the school's improvement and you are well on track to tackle a considerable proportion of the recommendations for improvement in the last inspection report. Nevertheless some minor adjustments to the plan would ensure clarity as to how the various actions are to be carried out, in order to improve the outcomes of different pupil groups.

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 academy has maintained good links with the local authority (LA) which has a good track record of providing effective support for the leadership and management of the academy. The LA has assisted the academy with the quality assurance of some of the schools' systems, for example, performance management, and for the academy's self-evaluation of its work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Manchester and as below.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools