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30 September 2014

Carol Phillips
Principal
Erdington Hall Primary School
Ryland Road
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Dear Mrs Phillips

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Erdington Hall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 September 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 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 April 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- ensure that written feedback to teachers focuses on the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups of pupils
- make sure that the Academy Council members more closely check the difference that teachers with responsibility for year groups are making to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching
- ensure that the school improvement plan contains measurable success criteria and clearly states who will evaluate the impact of the school's actions.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the vice principal, representatives from the Academy Council and representatives from the sponsor to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed including the latest information about pupils' achievement, as well as information about the quality of teaching. During the visit, you and the vice principal joined me on short visits to some classes. We looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to pupils about their learning.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been a number of staffing changes. The principal was appointed as a director of primary education for the Ninestiles Trust. In June 2014, you were appointed as the substantive principal. You were previously the vice principal at the school. At the same time, a new vice principal was appointed from within the school. A new assistant principal started working at the school in September 2014. He is responsible for leading developments in teaching. Two class teachers left the school at the end of the summer term and were replaced with two new teachers.

Main findings

You are working well with the vice principal to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. You are both making effective use of information about pupils' achievement to identify the precise actions that need to be taken to help pupils reach higher standards and make faster progress.

Your records of teaching indicate that teaching is improving. During my discussions with pupils, they were keen to talk about the increase in activities that are 'making them think'. We observed teachers reinforcing the importance of using suitable methods to solve mathematical problems and encouraging pupils to use grammar and punctuation correctly when writing. We also observed teachers asking questions which successfully extended pupils' learning. Teachers are planning suitable activities for pupils of different abilities. In a few lessons we visited, teachers had planned challenging work for the more-able pupils. However, the more able pupils were not moved on to this work quickly enough during the lesson. This prevented them from making faster progress.

Teachers' marking has improved. Teachers are providing pupils with the specific guidance they need to improve the quality of their work, including their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Pupils are taking greater pride in the presentation of their work. They are taking care to form their letters and numbers correctly and neatly. Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across different subjects are developing particularly well. The development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects is in the early stages.

You and other senior leaders provide teachers with regular written feedback following lesson observations and brief visits to lessons. This feedback does not always focus enough on the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups

of pupils. Consequently, teachers are not always made aware of exactly what they can do to help pupils of different abilities reach higher standards.

Pupils said and your records of behaviour incidents confirm that behaviour at lunchtime has improved. Pupils commented that lunchtime supervisors listen to and deal with any concerns they may have.

The Academy Council is responding appropriately to the external review of governance. The committee structure has been reorganised so that members can devote more of their time to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Council members have increased their visits to the school so that they can check the impact of the senior leaders' actions for themselves. They acknowledge the need to hold the teachers responsible for supporting teaching and learning in specific year groups to greater account.

The actions within the school improvement plan are appropriate. There is a strong focus on accelerating pupils' progress, improving teaching and further strengthening leadership. The plan contains success criteria, but they are not always measurable. Also, the plan does not make clear who will evaluate the impact of the school's actions.

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

Staffs within the Ninestiles Trust and external consultants are providing staff and senior leaders at Erdington Hall with an appropriate level of support and challenge. This is contributing to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Academy Council, the Academies Advisers Unit, and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector