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2 October 2014

Mrs Alex Owens  
Principal  
Spring Lane Primary School  
Spring Lane  
Northampton  
NN1 2JW

Dear Mrs Owens

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Spring Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 1 October 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 academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, the teaching and learning manager, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT) to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. I toured the academy and spoke with pupils informally about their work. I scrutinised pupils' books and examined other academy documentation. I checked the single central record.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, a new Principal has been appointed. A new manager for teaching and learning has also been appointed. Four temporary class teachers have

left and four new class teachers have been appointed, one of whom has since left the academy. One class teacher has been seconded to another school within the CAT family of academies. A new family support worker, a cover supervisor and two new teaching assistants have been appointed. The Vice-Chair of the Governing Body has resigned. Two new governors have been elected.

## **Main findings**

Although it has been a short time since your appointment, it is clear that you are determined to take the actions necessary to improve outcomes for pupils. You have acted decisively to address the issues identified at your recent inspection. Your academy improvement plan has clear actions and measurable outcomes for improving the quality of teaching. Your plan identifies where the governing body will evaluate your work through regular reports from you and other leaders. However, it is unclear how the governing body will check the quality of your work for themselves in order to hold you to account more rigorously for your actions.

You and the manager for teaching and learning have improved the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers plan more closely to meet the needs of all pupils. Systems for checking the quality of teaching are robust. You are improving teachers' performance through a combination of individually focused training and coaching that is matched precisely to their needs. You are holding teachers to account for their work through measurable targets for improving pupils' outcomes. Consequently, teaching is improving quickly and pupils are making better progress in their learning as a result.

You have improved the teaching of reading. You have taken swift action to ensure all pupils are reading books that challenge them to improve their reading skills at the appropriate level. You have ensured teachers check pupils' progress in reading regularly and, as a result, teachers are better informed about precisely what pupils need to learn in order to accelerate their progress in this subject.

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 Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT) has recently provided an achievement advisor to support the Principal to check the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. As a result, the achievement advisor has also begun to provide direct coaching and support for teachers to improve the quality of teaching. The governing body receives support from the CAT advisor for governing bodies in order to be more effective in holding senior leaders to account for their work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire, the Chief Education and Operations Officer of Collaborative Academies Trust and the Department for Education Academy Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**