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3 October 2014

Mrs Jenny Morrell  
Headteacher  
Strand Primary Academy  
Strand Street  
Grimsby  
Lincolnshire  
DN32 7BE

Dear Mrs Morrell

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Strand Primary Academy, North East Lincolnshire**

Following my visit to your academy on 2 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 June 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:

- strengthen the initiatives being taken to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by involving parents in their children's learning and ensure actions to support this and timescales are clear in action plans
- ensure that improvement plans for reading and writing make specific reference to the impact actions are to have on pupils' learning and progress
- make sure that all pupils understand how to raise concerns if their work is too easy.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the sponsor, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Discussions also took place with middle leaders and with parents. The academy improvement plan was evaluated and samples of monitoring undertaken by middle leaders and pupils' books were scrutinised.

## **Context**

A temporary teacher left at the end of the summer term and a newly qualified teacher has joined the academy to replace her as the Year 1 class teacher. The Chair of Governors resigned in September and the current executive headteacher, who is also a governor, has taken over this role temporarily.

## **Main findings**

Together with senior leaders and governors you have ensured that the pace of improvement has continued since the recent section 5 inspection. The academy improvement plan includes all the areas identified for improvement. The plan is firmly underpinned by a programme of staff training, new initiatives and revisions to policies and practice. Leaders and governors are using the results of monitoring and detailed analysis of performance data to finely focus their work. Plans to develop the teaching of mathematics are clear about the difference that actions are intended to have on the learning and progress for all groups of pupils. Plans for developing reading and writing lack this clarity and require improvement.

Results in summer 2014 show that more pupils are making expected progress and achieving basic levels in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing, whilst improving, remains well below age-related expectations. Additional support for Year 2 pupils is taking place in order to catch-up on ground lost in Year 1. Pupils' books from a range of classes in both key stages show that a planned programme of visits and experiences are providing more opportunities and impetus for their writing. Some pupils are enjoying writing their first poems. Pupils are beginning to act upon comments in teachers' marking to support their learning. Although pupils know how to get help if they are stuck, for example with writing and mathematics, they are unsure what to do if their work is too easy.

Expectations about attitudes and behaviour to support learning are displayed prominently throughout the academy. Pupils know what is expected of them but do not always follow these expectations fully. Specialist work taking place with a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour, and their parents, is beginning to deliver results. Parents are starting to see improvements in their children's behaviour. In discussion with you during the visit, it was clear that in order to further maximise the work taking place to raise academic achievement, the strategy of working in partnership with parents requires better co-ordination and threading through the academy's plans for reading, writing and mathematics.

Governors are working with the trust to develop an approach to tackle the recruitment issues that have dogged the school for some time. A full complement of staff is in place and plans to permanently fill the vacancy of Chair of the Governing Body are in hand. In the meantime his temporary replacement has a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. The challenge now for the governing body is to maintain the momentum of improvement.

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**

Good support has been provided by the School Partnership Trust Academies since the previous inspection. Additional support for leadership, through funding an executive headteacher for one day a week, has been sensibly refocused to mentor and support middle leaders in developing and refining their skills. A link with another school, Canon Peter Hall School, a good school, has been arranged by the academy in order to share good practice, and a programme of tailored support has been identified to support improvement in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and as below.

Yours sincerely

Gina White

## **Her Majesty's Inspector**

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- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies