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Ms D White
Executive Principal
Oasis Academy Blakenhale Infants
Blakenhale Road
Birmingham
B33 0XD

Dear Ms White

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oasis Academy Blakenhale Infants

Following my visit to your school on 26 January 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 October 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive principal, associate principal, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Academy Council and Regional Director of the Multi Academy Trust, and other Academy Councillors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plans were evaluated. Pupil attainment and progress data were analysed. Joint visits with senior staff and subject leaders to several lessons were undertaken. Reports of externally-led reviews were examined.

Main findings

At the heart of the substantial actions taking place to improve the school are comprehensive arrangements for the professional development of teaching and

support staff. These are led by the federated junior school and effectively supported with additional resources and expertise from the academy trust. This is quickly improving the quality of middle leadership, not least through inspiring and re-energising their personal commitment to raising standards by equipping them to take responsibility for pupil achievement. Additional developments include

- A new curriculum model that involves pupils in raising questions and sharing their current knowledge of a topic. This approach is capturing pupils' interest, and improving their learning. Because pupils are enjoying lesson much more, attendance is improving.
- Good data on pupils' prior attainment used by teachers' to plan activities to challenge different abilities of pupils.
- Much improved pupil behaviour in lessons, because pupils are finding lessons more interesting and, in the best examples, do not need to wait before getting started on the main task.
- Marking of work that is increasingly consistent across subjects and classes, with pupils responding to feedback with additional work.
- A substantial increase in the volume of writing done by pupils, that is already bringing about improvement in the quality of written work since October 2014. This includes extended writing in other subjects such as science and history.

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

There is clear strategic leadership, and effective practical support, provided by Oasis Academy Trust that is quickly securing short-term improvements in teaching and learning. In addition to the good professional support for teachers and managers, the Academy Trust has ensured good senior leadership for this infant academy through shared executive leadership and deployment of an associate principal from the adjacent junior academy. A single Governing Body, called the Academy Council, controls both infant and junior sites and is active in seeking information on pupil achievement, attendance and personal development through regular visits to the academy as well as from briefings by academy leaders. Re-modelling of the accommodation is combining the Nursery with Reception classes to maximise and refresh a shared learning space, including new outdoor learning facilities. The Academy Trust has bought its vision for local community support and development to the Blakenhale infant and junior academies. The academies are becoming a source of whole-family support, through brokerage of support services for families facing challenging circumstances. This is giving a clear direction and sense of commitment to staff, pupils and their and families, further engaging their interest in the school, and further improving pupil attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority