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Mr M Westgarth
Interim Executive Headteacher
Beacon View Primary Academy
Allaway Avenue
Paulsgrove
Portsmouth
PO6 3PS

Dear Mr Westgarth

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Beacon View Primary Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 5 March 2015, 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 December 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 interim executive headteacher, other senior and middle leaders and two members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A phone call was made to the primary director of the academy trust. Brief visits were made to all classes and the academy's action plan was evaluated. The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were also reviewed.

Context

The special educational needs coordinator is on long-term sick leave. Phase leaders are carrying out some operational work related to special educational needs and leaders are seeking support from other schools for other aspects of this role. Two new teachers started in January 2015, one taking the leadership role of KS1. Governors are exploring options for the long term leadership of the academy.

Main findings

The executive headteacher provides strong direction for the school's work, ably assisted by senior and middle level leaders. Everyone knows what is needed to move the school forward and they tackle their work with energy. The leadership team works well together and provides effective mutual support. They constantly reflect on what they can do to improve because they want the best for each and every pupil. Staff morale is high.

The head of school revisits the academy's values in a weekly assembly. As a result, expectations of good behaviour are effectively reinforced. Additional staff training has ensured a more consistent approach to managing behaviour across the academy. This work is paying off: improved behaviour is evident in the reduced number of incidents and exclusions since the academy was inspected.

The quality of teaching is improving. Leaders recognise the importance of high standards and, along with the academy trust, provide helpful support for teachers. Coaching for individuals is tailored to their needs and leaders sensibly arrange visits for staff to other schools to see effective practice. As a result expectations are rising and a higher proportion of teaching is now judged to be good.

Each phase leader concentrates on developing and improving their team. The early years teachers have rightly visited outstanding settings to raise expectations even further. They are already implementing a better method of assessment in order to improve their work. New teachers have strengthened the Key Stage 1 team. The new leader has already made some positive changes. For example, there is more effective use of support staff so more pupils can access the help they need.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding has taken place. There is better support for disadvantaged pupils in lessons because teachers think more carefully about their needs. Some well-targeted interventions have been put in place to help these pupils catch up if they have fallen behind. In addition, volunteers have been trained to support reading during the day. It is too soon to see the effectiveness of these new approaches.

There is a greater focus on developing pupils' basic skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught in groups to learn their letters and sounds (phonics) so teachers can set work at the right level of challenge. Consequently, a higher proportion of pupils are on

track to meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. In Key Stage 2, more attention is being placed on developing mental calculations, although the impact cannot yet be measured. The recently-introduced reading blog for Year 6 pupils is raising their enthusiasm for reading.

Governors maintain their good knowledge of the school. Link governors are used effectively to check the school's progress on the actions in the action plan and hold school leaders robustly to account. Now the pupil premium review is completed, they sensibly intend to appoint a governor to check this important aspect of the school's work through the teaching and learning committee.

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 trust provides valuable support. Staff appreciate opportunities such as the leadership conference, which help them develop effective practice. Support from Southway School has also helped immensely, for example coaching teachers to improve, and providing models of good practice. The director of the trust is fully committed to ensuring this help continues as long as required, whilst rightly recognising the need to develop a strong team able to stand on its own two feet. The academy trust is committed to securing strong leadership to take the academy forward on its journey to being judged 'good'.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard

Her Majesty's Inspector