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Adrian Davies
Principal
Yarnfield Primary School, A Ninestyles Academy
Yarnfield Road
Tyseley
Birmingham
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Dear Mr Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Yarnfield Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 25 June 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 March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, academy council members and trust directors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- continue to develop the expertise of the academy council so that they are better able to hold leaders to account for the performance of the academy
- continue to improve the quality of teaching across the academy by providing teachers with targeted coaching, and opportunities to work with each other collaboratively.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal and other senior leaders, phase and faculty leaders, pupils and members of the academy council and

trust directors, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and subject plans were evaluated as well as academy teaching evaluation records, target summaries and minutes of academy council meetings. I also joined you on a tour of the academy where we briefly visited several lessons.

Context

Since March's inspection, an additional Vice Principal has been appointed to the academy. Prior to the inspection there were major changes to the academy's leadership with you joining the academy in December 2014 and your other two Vice Principals joining in September 2014 and January 2015 respectively.

Main findings

You are very clear about what the academy needs to do in order to secure a good or better judgement at its next inspection. Prior to the inspection, you had already identified many of the issues pointed out in March's inspection report and had plans in place to tackle them. You have produced a detailed and ambitious school improvement plan that tackles, head on, areas that need to improve at Yarnfield. It extends beyond those areas for improvement singled out in the inspection report and therefore spells out a comprehensive improvement agenda for the academy.

You have worked at a pace since January 2015 to bring about swift improvement in the academy, a fact recognised in March's inspection report. Since March, you have increasingly seen more impact of your actions, and the improvement is recognised by trust directors, academy council members, members of staff and pupils. You have already changed the academy's leadership structure, its approach to teaching and learning and its rewards and consequences policies.

Teaching is improving because you have clearly explained what you expect from teachers, you have given them training and support, and you are carefully monitoring the impact of the changes you have made. Consistent timetabling across the academy has accelerated the progress that pupils are making. For example, all pupils now start the day with a phonics session that also supports the whole-academy priority of improving handwriting. As a result, there is now evidence in pupils' books of better presented work, including better handwriting, and pupils taking more pride in their work.

Pupils' progress is accelerating because of better teaching. However, there are still legacy issues resulting from historically weaker teaching at Key Stage 2 that will take some time to overcome. This is particularly evident in current Year 6 and, to a lesser extent in Year 5, and you are expecting outcomes in 2015 to be poorer than they were in 2014.

Communication at all levels has improved across the academy. The introduction of regular assemblies has helped to reiterate key expectations and messages to pupils

and staff. Improved clarity of expectations, combined with improving teaching and your review of rewards and consequences for pupils has led to improved pupils' behaviour.

You are starting to provide targeted support for teachers and this will increase in September as new staff join the academy, and leaders' capacity to mentor and coach others increases. However, collaborative working and personalised support is relatively new to many teachers in the academy and will need to be implemented with the same skill as the other changes already introduced.

The academy council provides effective support and challenge to the academy's leaders. It is supported by directors of the Ninestyles Academy Trust who recognise that further developing the expertise of academy council members is an ongoing priority, so that they can better hold leaders to account for the academy's performance.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You have received extensive and effective support from the Ninestyles Academy Trust in a number of areas. These include moderation of teachers' assessments, training for better reading partners, a review of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the provision of several network groups where middle leaders across the trust meet to share good practice.

You are also successfully identifying and accessing support from a range of other partners, because you are clear about what support is needed to secure further improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for insert local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - CEO of the Ninestyles Academy Trust
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- For academies [CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk]