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30 June 2015

Julie Hickinbottom  
Headteacher  
Weavers Close Church of England Primary School  
Alexander Avenue  
Earl Shilton  
Leicester  
LE9 7AH

Dear Mrs Hickinbottom

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weavers Close Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 29 June 2015, accompanied by Martin Finch HMI, 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 us 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure that the academy's action plan contains clear success criteria that are broken down into measurable milestones for improvement, so that governors can more stringently hold leaders to account for progress against key actions
- ensure that the roles of governors in evaluating the success of actions taken is made clearer in the action plan
- ensure that all subject leaders have the skills and training to carry out their roles effectively, by creating opportunities within the multi-academy trust for these leaders to learn from best practice elsewhere

- ensure that all monitoring activities carried out by leaders focus closely on the key areas for improvement, and that further monitoring checks that issued identified are consistently followed up by all teachers.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, we held meetings with you, subject leaders, three representatives from the Governing Body, including the Chair, and the Senior Education Officer from the Diocese of Leicester to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A further telephone conversation was held with the senior officer for governance and admissions from the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust. The academy's action plan was evaluated, along with current achievement data, records of the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and achievement, and minutes of meetings of the Governing Body. We made short visits to lessons, and looked at the quality of learning in a range of pupils' work books.

## **Context**

There have been no contextual changes since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

You and other school leaders have reacted with positivity and determination to the inspection findings. You have worked with partners from the trust to draw up an action plan that shows the key actions that need to happen in order to raise the quality of teaching, achievement and leadership. This plan identifies approximate timescales, and how each action will be monitored. However, it does not give leaders clear enough criteria by which to judge the success of each action. The role of governors in evaluating the success of each action is not made clear.

You have been effective in galvanising staff and in giving clear messages about what needs to improve, and how. For example, you have been clear about the impact that marking needs to have on pupils' progress. These expectations are not consistently followed by all staff. Some staff do not provide clear next steps for children to work on. It was clear during our visits to lessons, and from the range of pupils' work that we looked at, that not all teachers have the same high expectations for the quality of pupils' work, including their handwriting.

Leaders have created more opportunities for teachers to share best practice with each other, and to learn from teaching expertise in partner schools within the trust and the teaching school alliance. Leaders from the trust supported leaders and teachers to improve the teaching of mathematics. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve, and this has led to more children making expected progress, particularly in mathematics. However, teachers do not routinely take pupils' different starting points into account when planning learning to ensure that all pupils make

the maximum progress they are capable of. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress is not rising quickly enough.

More-able pupils are not routinely challenged in their lessons. They are sometimes given extra work to do, but they do not always find this work more difficult. Not all teachers routinely challenge the more-able pupils through their questioning. You have plans to introduce a new curriculum in September to provide additional depth and challenge for all pupils, but it is too soon to judge the impact of this initiative.

The re-organisation of phonic teaching has led to improved rates of progress in children's reading. As a result, the proportion who will meet the required standard is predicted to rise considerably this year.

Leaders, including subject leaders, have undertaken a comprehensive programme of monitoring since the previous inspection. This has included looking at pupils' work books, visiting classes to check on the quality of work and talking to pupils about their work. The findings of this work have mirrored the inspection judgements; for example, more-able pupils have told you that they sometimes find their work too easy. However, you and other leaders recognise that the organisation of monitoring has lacked a strategic overview, and therefore has not led to improvements being made quickly enough. Monitoring activities sometimes state what has been done well, but do not always highlight where teachers need to improve their practice. Areas for development that are identified are not routinely followed up, because each monitoring activity has a different focus. You have recognised and plan to address this issue by re-organising the programme of monitoring activities from September. You have also planned to ensure that all leaders involved in this work have opportunities to learn from best practice within the multi-academy trust and elsewhere.

Governors have undergone training through the multi-academy trust, and now have a clearer understanding of how to hold you and other school leaders to account. However, their role in the current action plan is to check whether actions have taken place. Importantly, they do not currently have enough information to check what the impact of the actions taken has been.

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**

Since the previous inspection, links with the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust have strengthened and this has led to improvements for leadership, including governance. Governors have undertaken training with the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust, and now have a better understanding of their role in holding leaders to account. They are expected to report back to the trust on their effectiveness in driving improvements, although this was not in place at the time of

the inspection. And now have a better understanding of their role in holding you to account.

A school improvement adviser from the trust has taken part in joint monitoring activities with you, and has supported you in drafting an improvement plan. She has provided further support with mathematics teaching. In addition, the Director of Education from the Diocese of Leicester has undertaken a review of the academy and has presented her findings to the headteacher. These reviews provide a useful and accurate view on how the school is doing. Governors have agreed that they will use these reports to check on the progress the academy is making.

You are making best use of your links with partner schools to support the improvement of teaching. You recognise that these partnerships could also be used to support subject leadership.

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

Deirdre Duignan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Leicestershire local authority
- Diocese of Leicester
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]