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Mr Justin Vafadari  
Headteacher  
The Kingfisher School  
Lichfield Road  
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Bristol  
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Dear Mr Vafadari

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Kingfisher School**

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 7 July, 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 March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Take urgent steps to rectify the legacy of pupil underachievement by making sure that all lessons are taught to a good and better standard.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work by ensuring that both teachers and pupils have the highest expectations of the work produced.
- Provide opportunities for Nursery staff to visit other good and outstanding nursery classes so that they can develop their knowledge of early years teaching further.
- Develop better relationships between home and school so that misunderstandings are avoided, parents can be more involved in their children's learning and pupils attendance improve.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive headteacher of Colston Girls' Academy Trust (CGS), three governors and seven subject leaders. I had a telephone conversation with the National Leader in Education (NLE) who is supporting the school. Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils. We made a number of short visits to classrooms together and looked at some of the pupils' work. I looked at the school improvement plan and the recent results in national tests for current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, the Reception teacher has left and the position is being filled on a temporary basis until the new academic year. There have been changes to the timetabling of the two Year 6 temporary teachers. In June a new teacher started in Year 5 and will take this class into Year 6. Four new teachers will join the school in September.

## **Main findings**

Your school improvement plan and actions to be taken to address the areas requiring improvement at the last section 5 inspection accurately emphasise the need for urgency. Together with the executive headteacher and members of the academy trust, you are rightly determined to improve pupil achievement. Reception children are making much better progress with an improved proportion now reaching a good level of development in key skills. There has been a greater focus on making sure that when they work and play on their own they deepen what they have been learning with their teacher. The Early Years leader has been spending extra time in the Reception class to support children with their learning of letters and sounds. She has also worked with small groups of children who have difficulty learning key skills. This has enabled Reception children to make better progress in their learning.

You are aware that those children who attend the part-time Nursery class are not as well prepared for Reception as those who have had full-time childcare prior to starting school. Although we saw children busily involved in activities in the outdoor area, we saw others restless and distracted during sessions led by adults. This was because the interests and needs of these young children were not being met. The Early Years team have started to develop links with other academy trust colleagues. This is enabling them to develop a greater understanding of the need to check the progress made by the children in their classes. Nevertheless, visiting other good and outstanding nursery classes in the local area would help to widen their experience and develop good practice.

You are rightly proud of the improved Key Stage 1 results for reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects improvements you have made to the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. The most recent national test results for Year 6 are below what

you expected and do not match those predicted by their teachers. Despite funding additional teaching staff for the Year 6 class, it has been too late to fully redress the pupils' legacy of underachievement as a result of poor teaching in the past. You are fully aware that the older pupils' ability to spell, punctuate and use grammar correctly remains particularly weak. Your English subject leader is making sure that these key skills are being taught daily. This takes place not only at the start of each English lesson but is highlighted during the session. This is making sure that older pupils are deepening their understanding of how to use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately in their own writing and when looking at the work of other authors.

Although the marking of books has improved, it is still too inconsistent. Consequently, pupils do not always fully understand how to respond to the comments made by their teachers and their written replies lack thought and care. Presentation of the pupils' books needs to improve further. Rulers are not used to draw lines, the squared paper in mathematics books is not always used appropriately and handwriting is untidy. This reflects teachers' expectations which are too low and the subsequent impact it has on pupils' attitude to and pride in their work.

By working alongside specialist teachers from the academy trust, subject leaders are developing a greater knowledge of the strengths and areas for development within their areas of responsibility. They have carried out checks to find out why pupils' skills are limited in certain areas and have discovered that there has been a lack of resources for developing the more practical aspects of subjects such as mathematics and science. This has been rectified by improving the resources available for learning but this has had limited impact so far.

Using the expertise of the teachers from the academy trust, subject leaders have adapted the way they use pupils' work to secure improvement in the presentation and marking of the work. Detailed plans of study have been devised for all subjects and these include ways which teachers can check how well their pupils are learning. Subject leaders are devising ways to make sure that pupils develop a deep understanding of the skills they learn. This is enabling them to use and apply these skills in different situations. For example, the mathematics specialist from the academy trust is ensuring that the pupils can confidently use their key mathematical skills in other subjects such as science, history and geography.

You are fully aware that the path to school improvement and successful teaching and learning is by developing the skills of your teaching staff. Training and development opportunities are a high priority in your school. Subject leaders are working well with other colleagues within the academy trust and wider local area. They are also keen to work with parents to support their children learn and have a number of workshop sessions planned for the new academic year.

The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has declined slightly since the inspection. However, attendance rates overall show little sign of

improvement. This is despite introducing a range of rewards for regular attenders, such as celebration assemblies to which parents are invited to. Improving the attendance of pupils remains a key priority.

Communication between home and school is improving. Information on the aspects of learning which are being taught in each class is shared with parents. For those pupils who find it difficult to behave as expected, regular reports and emails are sent home and a formalised system to record parental complaints ensures that all issues are dealt with systematically. Nevertheless, relationships with some families remain fragile. Not all parents are clear about some of the changes you are making and the reasons for these. For example, a small number of parents feel they are being kept at 'arm's length' by the school since access to the school building has been altered. You have introduced these changes to ensure greater security of the school site for all who learn and work here.

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 NLE from Weston All Saints Primary School (WASPS), in Bath and North East Somerset is providing quality support for the Reception class at The Kingfisher School. The new subject leaders have been given invaluable guidance from the Colston Girl's School specialists who have shared their expert knowledge. This is ensuring that skills are taught systematically, relevant resources are to hand and pupils' knowledge, understanding and its application are being developed appropriately. The school makes effective use of reports by an external consultant, employed by the academy trust, to support and challenge the accuracy of its own self-evaluation.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bristol and the Department of Education.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**