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18 November 2015

Mrs Emma Goodwin  
Principal  
Oakley Vale Primary School  
Cheltenham Road  
Corby  
NN18 8RH

Dear Mrs Goodwin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakley Vale Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 12 October 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 academy 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 April 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, the governors and trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you; two vice-principals; the Key Stage 1 and Early Years leader and another experienced teacher; the Chief Executive Officer and another representative of the trust; the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and the former Chair of the Governing Body, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documents including the school development plan, action plans for the provision of English and mathematics, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

I accompanied you on a tour of the academy, including all classrooms. I held informal conversations with staff and pupils.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, you have made some changes to your leadership team and appointed several new staff. You have a second vice-principal who joined you from the trust in September. You have also appointed a new assistant principal and six new classroom teachers.

## **Main findings**

Your development plan clearly addresses key themes that include the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. You identify those colleagues who are responsible for particular actions and when these will be carried out. You are aware that in places the dating of, and responsibilities for, monitoring should be stated more clearly. In a similar way, outcomes need to be more detailed and measurable to make sure that there is precise checking of how well your plan is working. It would be helpful to make direct specific reference to areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report, to demonstrate that these are a key part of the development plan and to reflect the good work that is taking place.

I understand that work to be carried out shortly by the trust with all their academies to review development plans will help to support this fine tuning.

You have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Your actions have been effective so that teaching is getting better. However, you are clear that the quality of teaching is not currently where you want it to be. You have high expectations for a rapid rate of continued improvement.

You have worked hard to nurture a culture in which colleagues are increasingly comfortable to share ideas, ask for support and have good-quality training opportunities, often led by your own staff. You and your leadership team have an accurate view of key areas of strength and those areas continuing to need development. Leaders act swiftly to follow up formal observations and drop-ins so that teachers are clear about what they need to do to improve their teaching. You ensure that the right plans and training are in place to help teachers. You regularly monitor how well these plans are working and leaders have demonstrated to me the positive difference this has made, so that, for example, teachers follow more closely the academy's marking policy. You are aware of the training needs of your support staff and ensure that they are included in professional development opportunities, especially in supporting the outcomes for the most able and providing the most effective support for classroom teachers.

You wisely recognise the potential of your staff and you provide them with valuable opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and develop their leadership skills. Your strongest teachers continue to strive towards further improvements in the quality of their teaching and can give clear examples of ways in which they have achieved this through the feedback they have received.

Your leadership team supports you well. Your vice-principals have produced well-thought-out action plans for mathematics and English that complement the development plan and address key areas identified in the last inspection report. You have revised the curriculum appropriately, to include strategies to boost boys' interest in their work. This means that they are more enthusiastic about, and improve the quality of, their extended writing and handwriting. You have taken time to choose the right schemes for the delivery of the curriculum to address these areas for improvement effectively. You ensure that staff receive essential training to establish new approaches rapidly; for example, in the teaching of mathematics. You have planned the roll-out of new schemes and resources with careful reference to outcomes, so that mathematics has been the immediate focus, with the timely launch of new initiatives in English to follow after half term. It is early days for the new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics to have brought about long-lasting progress, but initial signs are promising.

You are launching new initiatives to boost communications with parents and to involve them more in supporting their children's learning – for example, by distributing helpful information sheets for parents about the mathematics being covered in lessons and ways in which parents can get involved at home. You have identified when there have been barriers to positive communications with parents, and have worked promptly to address these. You have reviewed your systems for reporting to parents and have high expectations that teachers will produce high-quality written reports that match the information provided at parents' consultation evenings.

You are working with the governing body to set up a community forum involving your pupils' parents as well as those parents who are likely to send their children to your school, and local residents. This will forge productive links, boost positive communications and enable collaborative projects with the wider community.

The governing body has a clear view on the progress the school has made in addressing areas needing improvement. They are better placed to, and do, ask relevant and stretching questions regarding outcomes for pupils, due to the helpful training they have received from you and through the trust. They are aware of key groups that need particular focus in order to improve achievement. Governors have revised their links with different subject areas.

Governors communicate well with the trust. They are working with the trust to ensure their visits to the academy are productive and enable them to work effectively with leaders in order to contribute to the monitoring of progress.

The Chair of the Governing Body meets regularly with you and has reviewed the development plan with you for this year. The governing body as a whole has been less involved so far in this. It is important that this is addressed in future meetings when the development plan will be shared.

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, your leaders and the academy as a whole are supported very well by the trust. The trust identifies key people who can provide relevant and regular support and training for your staff. This has helped your work to review the curriculum, improve the quality of teaching, support newly qualified teachers and ensure assessments are accurate. Leaders have gained much from network meetings.

The trust has a clear view of the overall strengths and areas needing development across all its academies. It organises valuable professional development opportunities, enabling staff to share good practice and to make improvements across the trust. As a result, your academy benefits from their support. The trust recognises that its next step is to be more familiar with the finer details of the areas for improvement for the academy. The trust is keen to put support in place for you in key areas as needed.

You also receive valuable support from outside the trust including advice on behaviour management, education, health and care plans, moderation and mathematics training.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Executive Officer of Brooke Weston Trust, the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

Copied also to:

- [School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gsi.gov.uk)