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Mrs Vanessa Bragg
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bragg

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Treverbyn Academy

Following my visit to your academy on Tuesday 13 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 academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2015. 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 in order to become a good academy.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the head of school, subject leaders for English and mathematics, and two members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative from the Aspire Multi Academy Trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We conducted a joint learning walk to each class and together we scrutinised key documents including the post-Ofsted action plan and work from some pupils at the academy. We also talked to a number of pupils across the academy to gain their views.

Context

Since the last full inspection three teachers have returned from maternity leave, including the mathematics leader. A new senior leadership team is in place and a new governing body structure has been created.

Main findings

Your arrival at the academy as executive principal has brought much-needed direction and purpose. The work you started before the last full inspection to improve the quality of teaching and leadership continues apace. You are successfully building on leaders' emerging strengths identified in the last inspection report. Senior and middle leaders now know the direction they are going in and have taken ownership of the journey. Governors, too, are clear. Trust leaders have worked hard behind the scenes to ensure that staffing issues have been sorted out quickly. This has brought about much-needed stability. Parents' trust in the academy is growing again. Staff morale is high because they feel fully supported and able to contribute to academy improvement.

The post-Ofsted inspection plan aligns directly to the priorities set out in the last full inspection report. The areas to be developed link well together. The findings of monitoring activities are used well to adapt the plan and convey the overall picture of momentum and the steps to be taken on the way to the academy becoming good.

In order to sustain improvements, you are strengthening the leadership of the academy. The head of school, together with the English and mathematics leaders, are taking full responsibility for improving their areas of responsibility. They are developing appropriate skills in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their action plans on pupils' progress through lesson observations, examining work in pupils' books and analysing progress data. Coaching and mentoring support, provided by experienced leaders from the Aspire Multi Academy Trust, is effective. Leaders are also working more closely with other academies in the trust to develop the accuracy of teachers' assessments. As a result, leaders and teachers have a better understanding of pupils' achievement and the progress they need to make.

The new approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is proving successful. Staff are benefiting from observing phonics teaching at academies across the trust. Teachers' improving skills in teaching basic grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing the quality of pupils' writing. Activities to develop pupils' grammatical skills, when writing in other subjects, are resulting in a greater range, quality and quantity of work. Pupils illustrate these improvements when writing more complex sentences such as, 'Brunel, who was a reckless engineer, was arguably also Britain's finest.' You are aware that further work is

required, especially in developing teachers' understanding of how to meet the full requirements of the new National Curriculum for mathematics.

All staff are working together to raise their expectations by establishing the minimum expectation for classroom practice and for pupils' behaviour. A clear set of 'non-negotiable' features of lessons ensures that your feedback on monitoring activities is consistent and understood by all. Your reorganisation of staff meetings to focus explicitly on improving the quality of teaching is helping teachers sharpen their skills in identifying what pupils can do and what they need to do next to improve their work. The impact of your support and training can be seen in day-to-day lessons. Although some variation in the quality of teaching remains, you and your senior team are tackling it purposefully. Among teachers, there is a rapidly growing willingness to listen to advice and to improve.

An external review of governance was deemed not necessary following structural changes to the governing body. A root-and-branch restructure of governance arrangements across the trust has been completed. The appointment of two new governors has strengthened the skills of the academy board. Governors are beginning to become more effective in their roles because they are being fully supported by members across the trust partnership.

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

Directors from the Aspire Multi Academy Trust acted decisively to strengthen the leadership of the academy before the last full inspection in May 2015. Strong strategic decisions are helping to secure the future success of the academy. Your appointment as executive principal, at a time of significant staff turbulence, is proving very beneficial. The effectiveness of governors, the head of school and middle leaders is improving quickly as a result of a comprehensive training package. Termly external reviews from senior leaders across the trust provide detailed interim checks on the success of action plans and are used well to identify next steps and share best practice.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector