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26 January 2018

Miss Gemma Clark
Brampton Primary Academy
Brampton Road
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Dear Miss Clark

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brampton Primary Academy

Following my visit with Jonathan Newby, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 16– 17 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the academy’s previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children’s services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing stable and consistently strong leadership at all levels
 - improving teacher retention rates and providing staff with the necessary support to secure much-needed improvements in the quality of the curriculum and teaching
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels plan and take effective action to improve pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2
 - ensuring that assessment procedures are fit for purpose so that pupils' progress is tracked effectively
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - the standard of teaching and learning across the school is consistently effective, enabling all pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers challenge and engage pupils in their learning, using activities that are matched to pupils' different needs.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 16 January 2018 to 17 January 2018

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised books, school action plans, rates of attendance and curriculum plans. They checked the school's single central record and safeguarding procedures. Inspectors, together with senior leaders, visited all classrooms at least three times. Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to hear their views. This inspection focused on leadership and management and teaching, learning and assessment.

Context

Since the previous monitoring visit, both assistant headteachers have left. Their roles and responsibilities are shared among senior and middle leaders. A new teacher has been appointed in the early years. A Year 3 teacher has left and has been replaced internally. The school has a new business manager.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher, supported by two deputy headteachers, continues to make tangible improvements to the school's provision. Together, they have prioritised the development of leadership capacity and improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders have successfully implemented the 'Brampton standards'. These are used in lessons to give teachers and pupils a clearer understanding of what is being learned. Teachers and pupils spoke positively of the 'Brampton standards' and feel that these help them to understand learning activities more clearly than before.

The support for disadvantaged pupils continues to be a priority. Leaders have introduced the 'Brampton 360' approach, in which pupils, members of staff and parents are encouraged to share their views about individual disadvantaged pupils. The information is used to gain a deeper understanding about the needs of each pupil. Leaders set targets for each pupil that are regularly reviewed.

Pupils' attendance remains strong. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The school knows individual pupils well and uses a first-day response approach when they are absent. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has risen significantly, although it remains below that of their peers.

Leaders have successfully introduced a number of initiatives to improve the

effectiveness of phonics teaching. In the past, there was not a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics skills. As a result, many pupils left the early years and Year 1 with weak reading abilities. Staff have received professional development to help them apply a uniform approach to the teaching of phonics. Leaders are much clearer on the progression of pupils in phonics and have ensured that all children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 have been assessed.

Leaders have also introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading and mathematics, with targeted support from external specialists. This is already making a difference. In mathematics, work set for pupils matches their needs more closely. There is a consistent push to develop pupils' arithmetic skills. In reading, staff have received training on developing pupils' reading comprehension skills. Although at the early stages, there is now a greater consistency among staff in improving pupils' reading skills, compared to the time of the previous monitoring visit.

Leaders have implemented a new assessment system. This has been trialled in Year 6 and is beginning to make a difference. Teachers are able to identify each pupil's gaps in learning and then follow up with targeted teaching against specific objectives. Teachers are much clearer about the needs of their pupils and spoke confidently about the effectiveness of the new system in helping them plan meaningful lessons.

Senior leaders continue to work closely with staff. They provide hands-on support to individual teachers. This has resulted in marked improvements. For example, staff manage behaviour more effectively, and teachers' questioning has improved. Leaders have successfully developed the roles of middle leaders. They work to improve the quality of teaching and learning and check the progress that pupils make.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous visit. Some teaching, particularly in Years 2 and 6, demonstrates highly effective practice.

In the most effective lessons, the work matches the needs of pupils, including the most able. In English and mathematics, teachers and pupils use technical vocabulary with growing confidence. For example, pupils articulated their use of systematic strategies in mathematics and could identify the use of fronted adverbials in their writing. As a result, pupils in these lessons have made strong progress.

Teachers demonstrate a growing awareness of the potential of probing questioning to deepen pupils' learning. For example, in a writing lesson, the teacher skilfully challenged pupils to improve a piece of writing, using strong questioning to elicit well thought-out responses. Consequently, pupils have made strong progress and

demonstrated an ability to write fluently and at length, using ambitious vocabulary. Teachers have a strong rapport with pupils. Even in the weaker lessons, pupils behave well and want to do well. Pupils' attitudes to learning show further improvement.

In mathematics, there has been a consistent focus on improving pupils' arithmetic skills. Pupils' confidence in using taught strategies for calculations is stronger than at the last monitoring visit. For example, in key stage 1 pupils use number lines to add and subtract with confidence. In key stage 2, pupils use efficient methods to multiply more complex numbers, including decimals.

Teachers have introduced 'Brampton sizzlers' for the most able pupils, to develop their problem-solving skills. However, these are not yet accompanied by the necessary teaching to help pupils tackle them effectively. As a result, the most able pupils' understanding of how to solve these problems is limited.

The teaching of phonics is beginning to make a positive difference. Teachers develop pupils' phonics knowledge and skills using a more consistent approach. Pupils enjoy repeating newly taught sounds and try hard to use these in their writing. However, this is at an early stage. Pupils' opportunities to practise using their sounds are limited. Occasionally, teachers introduce words to pupils with letter sounds that they have not been taught. As a result, pupils' progress is variable.

There has been an improvement in the development of pupils' basic writing skills, particularly in Years 2 and 6. Teachers encourage pupils to write using legible handwriting and accurate punctuation. Pupils told inspectors that this approach helps them to present their work better. However, in many classes the expectations of pupils' writing by teachers is still low. Teachers do not support pupils to develop effective pencil grips to aid their writing, particularly in the early years and Year 1. Consequently, their progress in writing is not as strong as it could be.

Despite improvements in Years 2 and 6, the overall quality of teaching is still inconsistent. Teachers are beginning to show some improvements in planning interesting lessons. However, the challenge for the most able pupils and support for the least able are not consistently effective. As a result, many pupils still work below their age-related expectations.