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Melanie Gaskin  
Headteacher  
Greensted Junior School  
Kirby Road  
Basildon  
SS14 1RX

Dear Mrs Gaskin

## **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greensted Junior School**

Following my visit to your academy on 25 September 2014, 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 2014. 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. The academy should take further action to:

- review the progress targets for the current Year 6 cohort of pupils to make them more challenging
- ensure there is a clear plan to improve the achievement of the more able pupils
- build a thorough evidence base to judge the quality of teaching overtime
- ensure the governing body monitors the behaviour of pupils including its vulnerable groups to ensure it continues to improve

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and we toured the classrooms together. I met with the headteacher of the academy sponsor and a representative of the Basildon

Excellence Panel. I met with members of the governing body. I looked at documents including the academy's improvement plans, achievement data and records of your monitoring activities. I checked the safeguarding procedures for the appointment of new members of staff.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, the bursar has left the academy and been replaced. One teacher has left the academy and been replaced. The academy has recruited two further teachers to make class sizes smaller in every year group. Pupils are now taught in three sets for mathematics and English lessons. Four governors have left and the governing body is in the process of recruiting new governors with specific and relevant skills.

## **Main findings**

Year 6 attainment improved in 2014 when compared with 2013 outcomes. Attainment in writing and mathematics is now at or above the national average. Attainment in reading remains below the national average. Too few pupils attained the higher level 5 in reading, mathematics and particularly in writing. Not enough pupils made the expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in writing and mathematics although this improved significantly from 2013. The academy's assessments and tracking data show that older pupils made accelerated progress last year to make up for weaker teaching in Year 3 and Year 4 in the past. There remains a legacy of poor progress and some pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The academy is implementing measures to help pupils catch up quickly and to ensure they reach the expected level 4 before they leave the academy. However, some of the targets they have set themselves are not high enough, particularly for the progress of pupils.

The headteacher has high expectations and communicates these expectations clearly to the whole academy community, for instance, in the quality of her developmental conversations with pupils as well as with staff. She also demonstrates her expectations by giving teachers practical help to improve, including by team teaching. Monitoring of the teaching and learning is rigorous and areas for improvement are quickly followed up to ensure they have improved, consequently teaching is improving.

The role of other leaders in the academy is developing through training and professional development activities, for instance the headteacher conducts joint observations with other academy leaders in order to improve their practice and share her expectations. The academy now needs to build a profile of teaching using all of the evidence it collects in order to build an accurate and thorough body of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. This evidence includes,

achievement data, evaluations of planning and pupils' work as well as lesson observations and drop-ins.

Academy improvement plans set clear targets for what will be achieved and how this will be measured. There needs to be more clarity however in how the academy will improve the progress of the most able pupils.

The Chair of the Governing Body leads the governors skilfully. The governors are growing in confidence and skills. They understand that they need to hold the academy to account rigorously and have drawn up a draft plan to improve their own effectiveness. This plan helpfully includes sample questions that governors could ask in meetings to challenge the school. The governors know that behaviour has improved through their visits to the academy and improving exclusion data. They now need to consider a wider range of evidence to check that it continues to improve and to look for trends in groups of pupils. The review of governance suggested at the section 5 inspection has not yet taken place because the governing body was waiting to fill its vacancies. It is planned to take place in December 2014. Governor training on their roles and responsibilities has taken place and further training is planned.

The necessary pre-employment safeguarding checks are completed and recorded diligently.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The headteacher and the academy receive support from the academy sponsor and Basildon Excellence Panel to improve teaching and leadership. The representatives of these bodies also hold the school to account in regular meetings.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**