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15 May 2015

Ms Sam Linton  
Headteacher  
Temple Grove Academy  
Friar's Way  
Tunbridge Wells  
TN2 3UA

Dear Ms Linton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Temple Grove Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 15 May 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 school 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 February 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. The school should take further action to:

- sharpen the school's action plan to include precise success criteria and milestones for senior leaders and governors to check the school's progress
- ensure the action plan sets out who will take the lead and who will check each action, so that everyone is clear about their role.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders and three members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A meeting was also held with the Board of Trustees. Brief visits were made to all classes and the academy's action plan was evaluated. The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were also reviewed.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in February 2015 both Y6 teachers have left the school. The classes are now taught by the interim deputy headteacher and a newly qualified teacher. The assistant headteacher left at the end of April 2015, and a replacement has been appointed to start at the beginning of June.

## **Main findings**

Your enthusiastic and dynamic approach is fully focused on ensuring pupils at Temple Grove Academy receive the best teaching possible and achieve as well as they should. Teachers respond positively to the necessary changes, because you involve them fully and give them responsibility for improvements. One teacher commented, 'The trust and faith in us is refreshing.'

The school's action plan covers all the right areas from the inspection in February 2015. You clearly articulate your vision for the school and the steps to achieve this. However, there are no tangible targets to aim for within the written plan. It is unclear who is responsible for each action, or how and when the impact will be checked. This means the plan is not a useful tool for senior leaders and governors to measure the school's progress.

The recently-introduced system to collect information about pupils' progress is better used. Teachers have more confidence to implement the system assuredly in their day-to-day work. For example, Key Stage 1 teachers check how well pupils understand letters and sounds. They use the information effectively to adjust their lessons, targeting specific gaps in pupils' knowledge so they make good progress.

Middle level leaders receive helpful training and are consequently more confident in their roles. They support colleagues more effectively, for example by leading staff meetings to share good practice. They check pupils' work and teachers' planning to see what is working well, offering useful feedback for development. There are already some positive changes, such as better questioning and improved presentation in pupils' work. However, there is more to be done to ensure teaching is consistently good across the school.

There is rightly a focus on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and the standard of work is improving. The early years outside area is used more effectively and children get off to a better start. New methods of teaching mathematics in Key Stage 1 help pupils develop a higher level of skills. More regular opportunities for extended writing assist pupils to improve their work. As a result of these new approaches, better progress can be seen in most classes. More pupils in Key Stage 1 reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Nonetheless, there is still some

way to go to eliminate the legacy of poor teaching so that pupils in Key Stage 2 catch up with where they should be.

The new Pupil Premium Working Group of key staff and governors was set up in February 2015. Members check carefully that funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. An external review of the use of the pupil premium took place at the end of April 2015. The reviewer concluded that leaders and governors are taking the right actions. For example, teachers analyse the needs of disadvantaged pupils more closely. They take increased responsibility for ensuring extra help, such as tutoring for more able Year 2 pupils, is provided where needed. School leaders are aware that disadvantaged pupils miss too much school. They rightly plan to explore the reasons for this, and to take remedial action. This work is at an early stage and it is too early to evaluate the impact.

Governors have a better understanding of the school's data, which helps them to provide more robust challenge on standards. They rightly seek best practice elsewhere to help the academy improve. For example, they attend a range of training to ensure they are up to date. Governors visit more regularly, for example to see how different subjects are taught. These visits are not always linked tightly enough to the school's action plan to help them check how well the school is reaching its goals.

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**

There is a variety of valuable external support, although the full impact has yet to be seen. The academy improvement partner, from St James' School, Bermondsey, offers you useful strategic guidance. Staff from the same school also work alongside teachers at Temple Grove, helping to improve their practice. Ark Schools Trust provides beneficial support for newly qualified teachers, and new curriculum programmes in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**