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25 January 2016

Ms K White
Headteacher
Greenway Academy
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Dear Ms White

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greenway Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 15 January 2016, 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 June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the academy was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- develop middle leadership so that at an appropriate point it can play a role in monitoring and developing teaching and learning
- develop governors' capacity to hold the academy's leadership positively and strongly to account for the quality of its work
- implement more classroom-based strategies to promote the rapid progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection I met with you, the head of school for Years 3 and 4, and the Chair of Governors and two other governors to discuss the actions taken since the

previous inspection. We visited lessons in every year group together to see teaching and learning. I evaluated the academy improvement plan.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the responsibilities held by members of the senior team have been reorganised and there are now two heads of school, one for Years 3 and 4 and the other for Years 5 and 6. The governing body has been restructured into two main committees: resources, and teaching and learning. An additional governor who has a background in schools has been appointed. Three teachers have left and new staff have joined the academy. An extra class has been created in Year 4.

Main findings

You are providing the academy with strong and very effective leadership. You have great clarity of vision around what constitutes good learning and good teaching. Over the last six months, you have successfully conveyed some essential messages about what has to be different in the academy. You have exercised outstanding leadership skills to ensure that these improvements have come about. Staff and governors describe the last few months as a 'roller-coaster ride'; the vast majority recognise that the fundamental changes to the academy's way of working were necessary. They have now begun the process of completely transforming the quality of its work. You are well supported by your senior staff and the governing body, all of whom have shown a great willingness to change their practice, learn and rise to the challenges you have set.

The academy's development plan is a clear and useful description of what will be achieved by each point in the year. Its strength lies in its putting the quality of teaching and learning at the centre of the work of the academy. It describes how senior staff will monitor and evaluate the success of every initiative, and what resources will be deployed to support the actions described. You have understandably decided to limit its scope to one school year, given the degree of change required, and there are plans in place to produce a new plan for 2016/17 building on the successes of this one. The section at the end of the plan which gauges the extent to which the academy is beginning to meet the descriptions of good practice in the Ofsted inspection handbook is useful and gives staff and governors a clear sense of the progress being made.

You have identified clearly what constitutes effective teaching and have challenged and supported staff to adapt their practice to enable good and outstanding learning to take place. In the lessons we visited, I saw groups of pupils working successfully, and sometimes independently of teacher supervision, enjoying their work and relishing the challenges set. There is now a strong emphasis throughout the curriculum on pupils achieving mastery of key concepts before they move on in their learning, and teachers continually assessing the quality of pupils' learning to be able

to plan the next stages. This is ensuring that learning is secure as well as more rapid, and pupils' progress is improving as a result. The necessary improvements in Years 3 and 4 highlighted at the time of the previous inspection have been put in place and progress in these classes is better because of this. Higher levels of challenge and higher expectations are evident in nearly every classroom. A greater consistency in practice across classrooms has the capacity to lead to a better transition from one year to the next. This is managed smoothly and, as a result, learning is less likely to stall. Work in books is presented well and reflects pupils' pride in their work. Displays around the academy accent what good learning and good conduct look like here and set out expectations very clearly.

Extra staff have been appointed to help teachers to focus on essential teaching and learning. For example, a learning environment officer has been appointed who helps to maintain lively and stimulating displays around the academy linked to current topic work. Teachers are held to account for the achievement of pupils in weekly meetings. Intervention is planned and support is offered should any underperformance be identified. There are few subject leaders in place to play a role in this yet. However, there are plans in place to identify staff and offer training to develop their skills for them to be able to support learning in classrooms, monitor outcomes for pupils through classroom visits and check work in books.

Developing pupils' writing has been a major focus. There has been a good amount of staff training and coaching to develop teachers' knowledge of how to drive higher standards and how to improve their own grasp of some aspects of the work. A major emphasis has been on promoting pupils' enjoyment of writing. Everyone seemed to enjoy the Victorian fairground carousel visit recently, and some very high-quality writing has been produced in response.

Pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are beginning to make better progress. This is because their achievement is given an appropriately high priority. The academy's good use of the pupil premium grant enables these pupils to have a much broader range of educational experiences than may otherwise have been the case. Many now enjoy theatre trips, take part in sports competitions, and are supported to complete their homework to a good standard. The pupil premium grant is also used well to fund extra equipment and resources to help these pupils to learn better. You are aware that not all teachers are using a wide range of teaching strategies to promote these pupils' rapid progress throughout lessons, however.

Governors show a good knowledge of the academy's work, and are ambitious for its future. They have monitored the impact of the changes put in place since the previous inspection. They have prioritised the well-being of staff and pupils particularly closely during this time and have recently taken up a range of useful training opportunities. The governing body are fully behind your plans for the academy and support your actions, but are also aware that they need to develop their capacity to offer higher levels of constructive challenge and support to the leadership of the academy. For example, they prioritise the achievement of key

groups of pupils in the academy, such as those who should be benefiting from the pupil premium, and receive termly reports from you. However, they are not yet scrutinising outcomes for these groups in every year group against plans and targets frequently or closely enough.

The academy is now opening up to working productively with a wider range of other providers, including your own school in Medway. Relationships with the local infants school are now much more positive and productive to the benefit of pupils, their families and staff.

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

External support

The academy is drawing nearly all of its support from its partner school, Delce Academy in Medway, a member of the Castle Trust, of which you are the headteacher. This is suiting its needs very well. Staff have visited each other's schools and observed teaching and learning. They have shared teaching strategies and discussed approaches to curriculum design and assessment. The extensive support provided from a specialist leader of education from Delce Academy to develop mathematics teaching here has begun to transform the nature of learning in this subject. A consultant who works closely with Delce Academy has been used to provide high-quality training and coaching in literacy here. You have successfully adapted many of Delce Academy's policies and practices to meet the needs of this academy.

Governors benefit from attending training sessions run by the local authority, and you have had discussions around working with some of their advisers to support specific aspects of your work. Relationships with the local authority are becoming more positive and productive now.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector