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10 November 2011

Mrs K O'Sullivan
Headteacher
Stamford Hill Primary School
Berkeley Road
London
N15 6HD

Dear Mrs O'Sullivan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Stamford Hill Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative of the local authority for giving time to discuss the school's work.

As a result of the inspection on 19–20 October 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made inadequate progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In the most recent national tests, pupils' attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 was low in English and mathematics. Attainment remains low across the school. Currently, not enough pupils make the rapid progress necessary to overcome their low starting points and reach expected levels. Pupils start school with low levels of basic skills, especially speech and language. Most speak English as an additional language. The school's own recent analysis of pupils' progress shows that it is extremely variable across the school. The quality of lessons is not consistently high enough to ensure that pupils make ongoing good progress. Pupils make better progress in English than mathematics. Progress in mathematics was an area of weakness at the last inspection. Pupils are willing to learn and are prepared to engage with their activities. Behaviour is mostly good in lessons.

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. A focus on the process of the appointment in the two terms after the inspection meant that not enough attention was given to overcoming the identified weaknesses and low performance following the last inspection. At the time of this monitoring inspection, the new headteacher had been in post for eight weeks. Since her appointment, there has been a significant and very positive change in the pace of improvement and in the way the school's weaknesses are being addressed.

The new headteacher has shown very good and clear leadership, rightly focusing efforts on improving the key areas of teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring of pupils' achievements. The new focus has helped to ensure that all staff are clearer about their roles and responsibilities, including the English and mathematics subject leaders. There is now a greater and more appropriate focus on monitoring the quality of the school's work. Changes are recent and therefore the impact of new procedures and practices on raising pupils' achievements is not fully evident.

The accuracy of teacher assessment is improving and is an area of development for the school. The importance of the use of accurate assessment to check progress has been heightened with the introduction of regular pupil progress monitoring meetings between teachers and senior leaders. Senior leaders are aware that there is more work to do on improving the accuracy of assessment and linking the outcomes of assessment to teachers' lesson planning. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but its quality is inconsistent across the school. Senior leaders are involved in scrutinising pupils' books and this provides helpful information about the quality of learning. The school is developing a better understanding of the needs of different groups of pupils, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. There is a clear plan to provide additional support for the current Year 6 pupils to help them close the gaps in their learning and achieve higher levels.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and have rightly prioritised this as an area for improvement. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are some inadequate lessons. There is not enough good teaching. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good. There has been a focus on increasing the opportunities for practical activity to aid learning. New resources have been purchased to increase the range of practical activity in mathematics. Teachers are successfully involving pupils in lessons by asking questions. Pupils are keen to answer and explain their thinking. This helps teachers assess what pupils know and understand during lessons. Teachers plan activities which interest pupils but there are a number of underlying weaknesses which mean that not all lessons are as effective as they should be.

- There is a lack of confident subject knowledge in mathematics. This results in teaching not being as precise as it should be.

- The sequence of planned activities does not establish a clear thread of learning that runs logically through the lesson.
- The weak management of activities sometimes means that there is a hiatus in the pace of learning or that pupils are not as involved as they could be, for example waiting too long for their turn to speak.

Pupils' attendance is low but has recently improved. It is variable between year groups. The new headteacher has correctly taken a strong stance about not authorising requests for extended absences. This is an important improvement.

The governing body are becoming more knowledgeable about the school's performance but a detailed understanding of its strengths and weaknesses in relation to pupils' performance and procedures and holding the school to account are not firmly established. The local authority advised the governing body through the successful appointment of the new headteacher and has recently allocated consultant support. However, the overall impact of local authority support since the last inspection has been limited.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2010

Accelerate progress and raise attainment, particularly in mathematics and science, in Years 1 to 6 by:

- ensuring that key skills are taught consistently well through skilfully planned opportunities for practical experiences
- ensuring leaders at all levels use progress and attainment data rigorously to monitor pupils' progress and check how effectively pupils are learning in lessons.

Secure good and better teaching by:

- ensuring all teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons that proceed at a demanding pace so that all pupils are fully challenged to extend their learning
- giving pupils better guidance through marking about how they can improve their work
- matching work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities.

Ensure parents and carers fully understand the need for their children to attend regularly.