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14 December 2011

Ms A Brewer
The Headteacher
Stebon Primary School
Burdett Estate
Wallwood Street
London
E14 7AD

Dear Ms Brewer

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Stebon Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the representatives of the local authority and the staff and pupils with whom I had meetings during my visit.

Since the previous inspection in July 2010, the school has continued to be affected by the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher who, following a phased return, has recently resumed her full-time position. There have been some significant changes to staffing. A number of staff have left or have been appointed to new roles, including the English coordinator and the team leaders. Major building works commenced in March 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 July 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2011 was broadly average and slightly increased from the previous year. During this monitoring visit, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 were observed to be making good progress in their learning from starting points below those typically expected for children of this age. The vast majority of children are learning to speak English as an additional language and many start school with little or no spoken English. Pupils currently in Year 2 were observed to be active and enthusiastic learners when they identified

evidence from a text on the 'real' Red Riding Hood, to support their point of view. Pupils worked collaboratively, using a range of differentiated resources. Their good behaviour promoted learning well. Assessment strategies were accurately used and all groups of pupils were challenged. Pupils had many opportunities to be active participants.

Attainment in Key Stage 2 dipped in 2011 and achievement was inadequate for some pupils. Measures taken by the school to address this situation did not bring about sufficient impact and progress for all groups of pupils was slow. During this monitoring visit, pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was observed to be satisfactory overall. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of provision between classes in all year groups in this key stage. Planning is consistent throughout the school, although there is often a lack of detail regarding extension tasks. In some cases the more able pupils reported, and were observed, not to be fully challenged in their learning. In some classes, teaching assistants supported and promoted learning effectively, engaging with pupils, asking challenging questions or making observational notes. At other times, supporting adults were not used effectively and spent too much time being inactive. Lesson planning does not always give due consideration to the most effective use of adults. In lessons, a range of interactive strategies are being conspicuously successful in ensuring the increased engagement of all pupils. However, in some lessons teachers and other adults talk for too long, reducing opportunities for pupils to be active learners and in these lessons the sense of pace is limited and progress slows. Learning intentions are always shared and pupils are used to discussing their own and other's learning. Targets have a high profile. They are in pupils' books, displayed on walls and on desks. Older pupils, in particular, were able to discuss their individual targets in detail and were fully aware of their own next steps in learning. Monitoring and assessment procedures are increasingly rigorous and accurate. The headteacher holds a precise view of rates of pupil progress, attainment and quality of teaching throughout the school. Evidence gained during the monitoring visit concurred with these views.

There have been improvements in the systems to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. A key element of this has been in reviewing and revising the marking policy. As a result, the marking of work has improved and is completed regularly and, in many cases, in detail. The consistent whole school approach is understood by all pupils. The most effective marking routinely evaluates pupils' success at achieving the desired learning and provides guidance for pupils on how to improve their next piece of work. Many cases of pupils' responding to teachers' comments were seen. However, this high quality marking, providing useful developmental feedback that is responded to by pupils, is not used equally well by all teachers.

The environment for learning has been improved. All classrooms have 'working walls' for literacy and numeracy which support and promote independent learning. A beautifully illustrated and well-stocked library encourages reading. A range of school trips and activities are highly appreciated by the pupils and contribute well to increasing active engagement in learning.

Leadership has been strengthened through effective training at both senior and middle leadership levels and by the return of the deputy headteacher. As a result of a review of roles and responsibilities middle leaders now have responsibility for curriculum teams. They lead meetings, have developed and are monitoring action plans and provide a range of formal and informal support to colleagues. Team leaders are increasingly active in assessing the quality of work in their areas of responsibility. During conversation, team leaders demonstrated clarity of understanding regarding the impact of the quality of provision, for example in music and physical education, on pupils' motivation, progress and achievement in the school's priority area of English. In one lesson observed, topic work in information and communication technology (ICT) and history reinforced recount writing. Improvements secured in leadership, particularly at middle management levels, and also in the quality of provision indicate the school's satisfactory capacity to continue moving forward.

The Chair of the Governing Body is very experienced and supportive in his role. However, the governing body as a whole does not currently possess the knowledge and skills required to rigorously hold the school to account. The local authority is now supporting the governing body in addressing these issues. The local authority knows the school well and provides regular support and advice in addition to carrying out monitoring visits and review meetings. The school and the local authority are currently planning a bespoke package of support focusing on increasing the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good.

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

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve attainment, especially for more able pupils and boys, by:
 - ensuring there are regular opportunities for pupils to engage more actively in lessons
 - making sure there is suitable challenge for more able pupils in all lessons
 - providing regular opportunities for cross-curricular work especially to develop the depth and range of pupils' English language.
- Make sure that marking provides clear feedback to pupils on what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they are more actively engaged in assessing the quality of work in their areas of responsibility.