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Mr Danvir Visvanathan
The Executive Headteacher
Cleveland Junior School
Cleveland Road
Ilford
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Dear Mr Visvanathan

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Cleveland Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 May 2012 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative from the local authority who spoke with me during the inspection.

Since the last inspection there have been substantial changes in leadership. The former headteacher and deputy headteacher have both left the school and a newly qualified teacher also left at the end of the autumn term. The local authority secured the services of an experienced executive headteacher who will remain in post until July 2013. Two associate headteachers, one full time and one part time were appointed. Two existing assistant headteachers have responsibility for assessment and inclusion and one has recently been appointed as the new deputy headteacher for September 2012.

As a result of the inspection on 8 November 2011, 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 is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Under excellent direction of the executive headteacher, ably supported by the associate headteachers, the new structure of upper and senior leaders has substantially strengthened leadership capacity. Throughout the school, systems for quality assuring the school's work are now cohesive and purposefully focused on whole school improvement. Clearer lines of accountability and regular meetings between leaders at all levels mean that staff hear consistent messages and

understand how the school is being led. Processes in place to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are robust. Teachers have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development in their own teaching and as a composite picture for the whole school. Improved use of assessment data to track pupils' progress means that teachers and leaders have a more accurate picture of progress in each year group.

Senior leaders have secured the 'buy in' of all staff to meet higher expectations and aspirations for their work in raising achievement. All staff, including teachers, midday supervisors, administration staff and learning support assistants comment favourably about much improved communication. Increased consultation with staff has given them a voice in shaping changes at the school. They feel valued and staff morale has improved. A renewed passionate commitment from staff permeates the positive ethos at the school.

Improved leadership is rapidly improving teaching and better progress of most pupil groups. However, leaders are under no illusion that there remain pockets of slower pupil progress in some classes, notably in Years 3 and 5. Leaders rightly identify that securing 100% good or better teaching is critical in sustaining good or better progress for every pupil before the next inspection. The school's accurate assessment records and the quality of work in books show that pupils in Year 6 have made accelerated progress since December 2012. Key Stage 2 tests for English and mathematics are likely to exceed school targets and be at least in line with national averages.

From an initial audit of the quality of teaching by leaders in January 2012, observing each teacher for a whole lesson and scrutinising work in books, leaders established the main strengths in teaching and identified where additional coaching support was needed, such as with pupil plenary and setting success criteria. The remaining satisfactory practice receives regular lesson observation scrutiny by leaders, with excellent guidance to help teachers move from satisfactory to good competency. The proportion of good or better teaching now exceeds 70% and none is inadequate.

Good teaching is characterised by good pace, challenging targets for pupils' progress and planning that has clear aims, success criteria and content matched to pupils' abilities. Most lessons seen during inspection included a good balance of small group, whole class and independent work developing pupils' oracy skills and their ability to write using a range of vocabulary and complex sentence structure. In one lesson, pupils worked effectively in groups experimenting with the absorbency of different fabrics, recording their results and linking this to their study of Tudors, advising Henry VIII about the best material for his shoes.

Improvements in reading are evident because the regular and systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) receives high priority in staff training. Most pupils who read to the inspector were confident in segmenting (breaking down) the number of sounds in words and pupils say they enjoy reading. Literacy walls and vibrant

displays of literacy and numeracy targets help pupils assess their learning. Most pupils understand their targets for improvement. In satisfactory lessons the pace and quality of learning is hampered by over-long teacher explanations and activities for more able pupils are not sufficiently demanding.

The quality and consistency of marking is improving. Most teachers provide guidance to pupils about what to improve, how and why. In the most effective marking pupils receive next steps which they respond to and a dialogue ensues in pupils' books that helps teachers scaffold and challenge pupils' learning. This excellent practice is not embedded in all classes. During the inspection, parents expressed how pleased they are that homework is now regular and, because marking has improved, they can better support their children's learning at home. Parents are very pleased with the heightened presence of leaders on the playground. They appreciate greater openness, describing leaders as 'always ready to listen'.

Increased time for joint planning between teachers and learning support assistants is starting to improve their effectiveness in the classroom with pupils who speak English as an additional language, small group work and with pupils with special educational needs.

The governing body is developing its capacity to hold the school to account through a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities in driving improvement. The expertise of the entire governing body in monitoring the school's work regularly through visits to the school, and asking challenging questions of all leaders about assessment data and monitoring of teaching, is emerging. New policies are in place for operational matters and ratification and evaluation of the impact of policy on practice is evolving.

Support from the local authority is well received. The combination of the good quality local authority statement of action, the school's post Ofsted action plan and monitoring by senior leaders, sharply focus the school on addressing the areas for improvement. Records of intervention work by local authority consultants show effective work with leaders to develop well-tailored support to improve schemes of work, teaching and the systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). Staff are involved in evaluating the progress of the school against outcomes criteria in the post Ofsted action plan. They have a clear understanding of the passionate vision to achieve excellence at the school in a happy environment for pupils and staff.

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

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2011

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - implementing a regular programme to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, together with appropriate support to address areas for development identified
 - improving communication and raising staff morale
 - ensuring staff are fully involved in planning for improvement
 - ensuring all policies are specific to the school's context
 - improving the challenge given by the governing body and governors' involvement in setting strategic direction and monitoring improvements.
- Raise pupils' knowledge of the relationships between sounds, letters and words by:
 - ensuring they receive well-informed teaching
 - creating prominent, interactive literacy-based displays in all classrooms
 - linking individual assessments of progress in literacy to what pupils are taught next.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that by December 2012 most is good in all subjects, by:
 - matching work consistently well to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring all lessons have clear aims
 - raising the pace by ensuring pupils learn actively and independently
 - ensuring teaching assistants are deployed effectively in class
- Raise pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve by:
 - making sure marking gives specific guidance
 - giving pupils clear, challenging targets for improvement
 - ensuring pupils regularly evaluate their own work.