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19 December 2012

Ian Trafford
Headteacher
Benhurst Primary School
Benhurst Avenue
Elm Park
Hornchurch
Essex
RM12 4QS

Dear Mr Trafford

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Benhurst Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority. The school's action plan was evaluated.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

The school's action plan is rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. It has clear success criteria and milestones, although some timescales lack urgency. Senior leaders were able to report positive progress already in some areas. Some whole staff training to improve teaching and learning has taken place. During a

period of focused monitoring, the school has identified improvements in marking. Senior leaders have received additional training in lesson observation leading to a better understanding of how to assess teaching. Teachers are planning together and arrangements exist to share best practice through observation of one another and teaching some lessons together. The school has identified the need to improve the achievement of some White British boys and the quality of teaching in classes containing pupils from more than one year group. It has not yet drawn on the expertise of other schools to promote improvement in these areas.

Governors, while highly supportive, are not yet fully involved in evaluating the work of the school and it is not clear how they propose to develop their effectiveness. The governing body has no separate action plan, its impact has not been reviewed, and monitoring by governors is not written into the school's development plans.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- increase the sense of urgency regarding timescales in the action plan
- arrange an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved, (the school should contact the National College via governance.review@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk to request a review of governance)
- locate and learn from primary schools with expertise in managing mixed-aged classes and/or promoting the achievement of White British boys
- in co-operation with the local authority, seek additional partnership arrangements in order to benefit from fresh approaches to raising achievement.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Prior to the recent inspection the local authority had notified leaders that the school was to be included in its programme of support and challenge for schools likely to receive a 'requires improvement' judgement from Ofsted. The local authority has established a termly monitoring board to review the school's progress regularly. Local authority staff visit the school to provide staff training to improve teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector