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10 May 2013

Ms Barnard
Headteacher
Horn Park Primary School
Alwick Road
London
SE12 9BT

Dear Ms Barnard

Monitoring inspection of Horn Park Primary School, Greenwich carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following my visit to your school on 10 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on my 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 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 December 2012.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a group of teachers. We evaluated the school improvement plans. We walked around the school together to meet teachers and pupils during lessons.

Context

Since the inspection the previous headteacher has resigned. You have taken up your post as headteacher and the school has joined a federation with three other primary schools. A senior leader has been seconded to the strategic leadership team to help develop leaders' skills and to lead on improving teaching and learning. Areas of the school have been redecorated and reorganised to provide more opportunities to display and celebrate pupils' work.

Main findings

You work closely with the executive headteacher and together you provide dynamic and inspirational leadership. You have responded with urgency to the recommendations in the previous report and have introduced rapid changes. You have achieved a lot in a very short time and have the confidence and support of the staff, governors and the local authority. Everyone understands what the school needs to do to improve to become a good school.

Most progress has been made in improving teaching and learning. You insist that staff are outward looking and reflective. Clear examples of good teaching and learning and a list of 'non-negotiables' linked to the National Teaching Standards help them to understand what they need to achieve. Carefully planned opportunities to visit a range of schools in the federation and elsewhere to observe good and outstanding teaching and to work with others are raising expectations and encourage rapid improvement. Although it is early days, the signs are that teaching is more exciting and purposeful than at the time of the last inspection. Behaviour is managed more consistently in classes and in the playgrounds. As a result of these changes, pupils are ready to learn and they are more willing to attend school regularly. Attendance is improving. Achievements are celebrated in classrooms and around the school so pupils are eager to talk about their learning and are proud to display their work.

Leaders' roles and responsibilities are now in line with school improvement priorities. Individual impact plans with clear targets make sure that all leaders know exactly what their responsibilities are and what they are expected to achieve week by week.

The school's comprehensive improvement plans reflect a strong partnership between the school, governors and the local authority. Plans set out clear long-term priorities, and specific actions for improvement. The schools' progress against targets is checked regularly by the governing body and the local authority.

Governors are knowledgeable and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A small core group of governors provide strong challenge to school leaders and, in consultation with the local authority, have managed changes in leadership effectively. Governors would benefit from support to further develop their skills and confidence in how to use a wider range of evidence to evaluate the school's progress. Opportunities to work with effective governors in other schools across the federation could be used to help them evaluate their own effectiveness.

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

- provide opportunities for governors to work alongside effective governors in other schools so that they all develop the ability and confidence to evaluate the progress the school makes and to assess their own effectiveness.

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

External support

The school is drawing very well on the targeted support provided by the local authority. Regular visits from an improvement partner and a termly review of progress against the recommendations from the previous report provide effective challenge to the school. Teachers and leaders are benefiting from extensive opportunities to observe effective teaching and learning and to work with other schools in the federation.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Greenwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector