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Mrs A Tapscott
Headteacher
Rebecca Cheetham Nursery Education Centre
Marcus Street
London
E15 3JT

Dear Mrs Tapscott

Monitoring inspection visit to Rebecca Cheetham Nursery Education Centre carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Following my visit to your school on 28 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 section 5 inspection in February 2013 when the school was judged to require improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, staff planning and some samples of children's special books. We observed some activities in the nursery, and I met briefly with a couple of parents.

Context

Since the inspection, the seconded acting deputy headteacher has been appointed to the substantive post.

Main findings

The school improvement plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection. A range of actions are already well underway. Importantly, you have taken account of the views of all staff, governors and some parents to devise

these actions. You are beginning to evaluate the actions in terms of their impact on the quality of provision as well as using information about children's progress to justify whether actions have worked or not. The deputy headteacher's progress updates describe in great detail what has taken place and the impact on staff practice but some updates could be sharper about the impact on the children. It would be beneficial to use these updates to identify what needs to happen next so that your plan evolves to tackle the school's changing needs and you set new timescales for the new actions.

You have done much to improve the indoor and outdoor physical resources. This has given the children greater opportunities to explore things for themselves. Staff have been trained in how to use the outdoors facilities and how to ask more open-ended questions in their teaching. I could see some effect of this training in practice. An increased focus on children's mathematical development is evident in staff planning, as well as in the range of resources that encourage children to use numbers throughout the day. Specific, focused activities are also planned to help children learn new words. We agreed that more can be done to help children respond using full sentences. While ensuring that children choose some activities for themselves, there is a greater focus on directly teaching children some of the skills they need to be ready to move on to the Reception Year. Staff make more focused observations of children's learning throughout the day to build a better picture of what children can do and what they need to learn next. The system you use to measure children's progress over time is developing well and helps you to hold staff accountable for what their children achieve. You have raised your expectations of all the adults, including those that are not qualified teachers, by measuring quality using the Teachers' Standards in all observations.

There is a training element to all governing body meetings and governors have benefited from some bespoke training organised through the local authority. Having secured stable leadership and put the school's finances back on track, governors are able to focus more on their prime purpose: holding the school's leaders accountable for children's attainment and progress. Importantly, governors receive better information about children's progress which they challenge and use to ask searching questions of you and your deputy. They visit the nursery often, although the Chair of the Governing Body would like to be more systematic about how and when governors' visits are organised. I recommended that visits focus on a specific action from the school's improvement plan, thus increasing governors' role in checking that actions are having the desired effect on improving provision for children. At the feedback, I mentioned Ofsted's publication 'School governance: learning from the best' as a source of good practice for you to draw upon.

Parents spoke positively about the changes they have noticed. They welcome the 'stay and say' meetings where they can pass on their views. They feel well-informed about what their children are learning at nursery but were less clear about their role

in children's learning. We discussed several ways of involving parents in their children's learning and I recommended Ofsted's publication 'Schools and parents'. Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. You should take further action to:

- make sure that your evaluations show clearly the impact of actions on children's learning as well as helping to determine the next actions
- sharpen the timescales for actions and strengthen governors' role in checking that actions are working.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You are using local partnerships, including through the soft federation, to provide effective support, coaching and advice for staff. Training from consultants organised through the local authority is also having a positive impact on improving provision. Training for governors is valued highly and its impact can be seen in the level of challenge that governors provide. Regular visits from local authority officers review the progress you are making and provide you with a good level of challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon
Her Majesty's Inspector