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12 July 2013

Ms Davindar Bhalla
Headteacher
Starks Field Primary School
167 Church Street
Edmonton
Enfield
N9 9SJ

Dear Ms Bhalla

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Starks Field Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a group of middle and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school development plan was evaluated along with other documentation. I also carried out a tour of the school with you.

Context

Some staffing changes are planned for September. The deputy headteacher, the Key Stage 1 phase leader, the special educational needs co-ordinator and two classroom teachers are leaving the school at the end of the summer term. You plan to appoint a new deputy head next term and in the meantime a temporary appointment has been made to fill the vacancy. A further temporary appointment has been made to cover a maternity leave for the assistant headteacher, until she returns in January.

You have appointed an existing member of staff to fill the special educational needs co-ordinator post. Two teachers, including one newly qualified teacher, have been successfully recruited and will take up their posts in September. You are still trying to recruit another classroom teacher and a teacher to take responsibility for helping pupils to improve their reading skills.

Main findings

The school development plan correctly identifies the actions that need to be taken and demonstrates that leaders have a good understanding of the priorities. It has allowed you to regularly review and evaluate the progress you are making. However, it is not always clear who will check that actions have been carried out successfully. The roles of the governing body and local authority in supporting, monitoring and evaluating improvements also need to be clearer.

Standards in mathematics have improved and most pupils are now making expected rates of progress. Some are starting to make accelerated rates of progress as they move through the school.

Your new systems for analysing information have resulted in all staff being aware of how individuals and groups across the school are performing. Teachers are now using this information to teach lessons that take account of every pupil's needs. This has resulted in improved rates of progress and when progress is less than good, it is recognised, allowing further interventions to be made. For example, you have correctly identified that standards in writing are still below average across the school and this will be a focus for all teachers next year. You are setting aspirational targets for pupils and teachers to work towards. These are monitored carefully through pupil progress meetings, use of assessment information and observations of teaching. You are seeking opportunities to work with other schools, such as through the Edmonton Schools Partnership, to help you identify further improvements that could be made.

Teachers are held accountable for their performance and additional training has taken place, for example, in the teaching of letters and sounds to improve reading. Professional training opportunities have been carefully planned and link closely to the needs of individuals and the development plan for the school. You monitor the quality of teaching regularly through lesson observations, looking at pupils' work and checking teachers' planning. As a result, the amount of teaching that is good or better is increasing.

You have restructured the senior leadership team to improve your capacity to lead and monitor improvements effectively. Temporary appointments will take up their posts in September but the new team will not be complete until January. You are aware that new roles and responsibilities must be established without delay so that the pace of improvement does not slow. An external review of the governing body

has now been commissioned and will take place early next term. Any actions that are identified will be implemented as soon as possible. In the meantime, the governing body monitors the progress of students carefully and holds school leaders to account for raising standards as quickly as possible.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the external review of governance is completed and any recommendations are implemented as quickly as possible
- amend the school development plan so that it identifies how leaders, governors and the local authority will monitor the effectiveness of identified areas for improvement so that pupils make better progress
- ensure that the responsibilities of the restructured leadership team are carefully defined and leaders are held to account for raising levels of pupil progress from September.

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 appreciative of the on-going support provided by local authority officers, which you consider to be of a high standard. Consultants have helped you make improvements in mathematics, science and literacy teaching. They have also advised you on the quality of teaching within the early years and foundation stage classes. They have helped you ensure that pupils' progress is measured accurately across all year groups. A leadership and management advisor has worked with you to improve your use of data and help you write the development plan. A school improvement advisor regularly monitors that improvements are raising standards at the school and that your judgements are correct. It has been agreed that this support will continue until the next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector