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10 July 2013

Bella Street
Associate Headteacher
Paul Cotter
Executive Headteacher
Ashburnham Community Primary School
17 Blantyre Street
London
SW10 ODT

Dear Miss Street

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ashburnham Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During my visit I met with you and your senior leaders, leaders from Fox Primary School, members of your governing body, teaching staff and your improvement officer from the local authority. The school's development plan, information about your monitoring of teaching, data about pupils' achievement and minutes of governing body meetings were evaluated. The tour of the school gave us the chance to observe pupils in lessons and discuss improvements to teaching.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the staffing or school's organisation since the recent inspection. The executive headteacher and his leaders from Fox Primary School are continuing to provide leadership support for Ashburnham.

Main findings

Working with your executive headteacher, your leaders and governors, you are successfully transforming teaching and learning, stating clearly your vision and strategy for improvement. You have made clear decisions about new leadership roles and responsibilities, ensuring that middle leaders are learning from more experienced senior leaders. Staff are extremely positive about the support they are receiving to help them rise to your high expectations. Equally, staff praise your clear communication about what pupils should be aspiring to achieve and what they are currently achieving. The systematic changes are helping all staff understand their role in raising achievement. Staff feel valued, and, as one teacher said, 'invigorated'.

Your investment to improve classrooms, work space for staff and organisation of learning resources has produced a purposeful, vibrant school environment. The newly arranged bookcases for guided reading with a ranking of books for pupils, the specific spaces for structured and free flow learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the increased use of pupils' work in classroom displays are supporting better pupil progress and their aspirations to do well.

You have reviewed all internal information about pupils' achievement. As a result, teachers and leaders now have accurate data about levels of attainment and progress. You have helped teachers become more confident with using average point scores to assess pupils' learning. Internal moderation, with support from leaders from Fox Primary, has brought more rigour and accuracy in assessing levels of pupils' achievement. Senior leaders now provide robust feedback to teachers and teaching assistants to help them understand how to improve their planning for the different needs of pupils in lessons. They are effective in modelling this for new middle leaders. You can further improve the focus and recording of lesson observations by noting the impact of teachers' work in developing pupils' subject knowledge, and how well different groups of pupils achieve.

Senior leaders have set new targets for teachers and are being effective in tackling underperformance. Through personalised coaching support and visits to work with colleagues at Fox Primary School, teachers are refining their teaching and how they use marking to give purposeful comments to pupils to help them improve. Some pupils' books show good response to feedback. Revisions to how literacy is taught with more emphasis on visual literacy work, help pupils apply their ideas more effectively in descriptive and analytical writing.

Your school action plan and subject development plans are closely linked to the areas requiring improvement. They outline roles, responsibilities, actions and milestones to test the impact of your development work. Until recently, because of inaccurate data in the school, you have not been able to set measurable targets for pupils' achievement based on their progress. We agreed that the next step is to include specific targets for the progress of groups of pupils including those benefitting from pupil premium funding. There is insufficient detail in your plans

about how to strengthen governance. Governors need to reflect on their work and devise targets for their improvement.

Governors have provided good support during a significant period of turbulence in leadership. The governing body fully understands why Ashburnham requires improvement. Governors are committed to securing rapid improvement in their own work and in helping all staff improve teaching and achievement. They ask more demanding questions about pupils' progress, helped by the fact that leaders are providing more accurate and accessible data. Governors are not robust enough in analysing how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact in closing gaps in achievement of looked after children and pupils eligible for free school meals.

Governors' readiness to learn about how to strengthen governance is a key strength. The Chair is actively seeking opportunities to link with schools where leadership and governance is outstanding. Governors are using resources from the National Governors Association to begin to review their knowledge and skills. A strategic action plan to develop governance is not in place. We agreed that this should be a priority, so that governors have a secure training plan in place for their development work in the autumn term.

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:

- use school data to set challenging targets for all pupils and include these targets in the school development plan.
- make certain that lesson observations and feedback forms always include reference to the quality of pupils' subject knowledge and how well different pupils achieve in lessons
- plan training for all governors to help them develop a more detailed understanding of achievement data and the impact of pupil premium
- develop a strategic action plan for strengthening governance.

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

The partnership work with Fox Primary School provides you with good support and challenge to address the priorities in your school development plan. You are receptive to new ideas and this is strengthening the rate of improvement at Ashburnham. The local authority has monitored the school effectively over the last twelve months and has an accurate understanding of its progress since the recent inspection. The local authority has successfully brokered the partnership support from Fox Primary School. The improvement officer who worked with the school last year provided the school with clear messages about how to track the progress of

different pupils at the school. The improvement officer agreed that more input from the local authority to support governors would be beneficial.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Tri-borough Director of Children's Services for Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector