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Annette Szymaniack
Headteacher
Grange Primary School
Welbeck Road
Harrow
HA2 0RY

Dear Ms Szymaniack

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grange Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 September 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- embed the non-negotiable curriculum to raise standards across all year groups and hold teachers to account for pupil achievement more effectively
- use the available tracking systems to identify gaps in learning and target further interventions so that all pupils, including those who join the school late, make the progress of which they are capable.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, a group of teachers holding posts of responsibility, the chair, the vice chair and four other members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development plans were evaluated. I also joined you on a tour of the school.

Context

There have been some staff changes since the inspection with eight new teachers joining the school in September. This has included four newly qualified teachers and three teachers who have accepted posts of responsibility for different key stages and curriculum areas. You are planning to increase the number of teaching assistants to provide more support within the early years and foundation stage and for pupils who have recently arrived with a statement for special educational needs. The recruitment for these posts is still on-going. Several new members of the governing body have been appointed and governance roles and responsibilities, recommended by the external review of governance, have taken effect from the start of this term.

Main findings

You are determined that the school will be judged to be at least good as soon as possible. You have therefore continued to implement a number of improvements that started before the last inspection. The school action plan shows a clear understanding of the priorities. It is ambitious and identifies wider improvements as well as those identified within the inspection report. Leaders and teachers have used it to develop further plans that are detailed and specific. These allow you to regularly review and evaluate the progress you are making. You check that your own judgements are accurate by asking other professionals to assess the impact your work is having. The role of the governing body and the local authority in supporting, monitoring and evaluating improvements is made clear. Your plans are shared with staff, governors, parents and pupils, who are all working together to make rapid improvements.

The standards reached by pupils improved again last year. While there are still some inconsistencies across year groups, you are aware of this and are planning how to respond. Your systems for tracking and monitoring pupil progress are efficient. This is especially important as a significant number of pupils join and leave the school throughout the year. Pupil progress meetings and careful monitoring of the quality of teaching has allowed leaders to know how much progress individuals and groups are making. You are starting to use this information to ensure that targeted support is provided for all pupils, including for the more able, for those with English as an additional language and for those who have special educational needs.

A planned programme of training and coaching has meant that there is an increasing amount of good or better teaching in the school. Teachers say they are helped to make further improvements by opportunities to work with teachers from other schools and through peer observations. Middle leaders feel trusted to make necessary changes and are encouraged to develop their own plans for improvement that draw on their particular strengths and skills. This is contributing to the rapid pace of improvement across the school.

School leaders have introduced a curriculum that takes account of pupils' knowledge and understanding for each year group. These minimum standards are being used to raise achievement in literacy and numeracy and are seen as non-negotiable. This is already starting to have an impact on the quality of written work and use of mathematical concepts across the school. Further work to embed this is on-going.

Following the inspection, the external review of governance was quickly completed and the recommended actions taken. The newly formed governing body is now holding leaders to account and brings an impressive range of skills and experience to support the planned improvements. Governors take every opportunity to visit, link effectively with parents and have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving.

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 consider that the local authority has provided you with good support. This has included working with a school improvement partner from Harrow School Improvement Partners (HSIP) who has helped you to recruit staff and participated in teaching observations. The local authority has also facilitated links with another school within the borough in order that staff at both schools can moderate assessments, share training opportunities and observe each other teaching.

You have also arranged for two independent consultants to help with introducing a new behaviour policy and providing coaching opportunities for staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector