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Mr Justin Burt
Headteacher
Friars Primary Foundation School
Webber Street
London
SE1 0RF

Dear Mr Burt

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Friars Primary Foundation School

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 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:

- make sure that recommendations from the review of governance are implemented quickly

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Vice-Chair and two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action

plan was evaluated. I scrutinised the schools' records of the monitoring of teaching, intervention plans and a sample of pupils' exercise books. I visited classes with you in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Context

One teacher has left since the last inspection. A new teacher has been appointed.

Main findings

The headteacher and senior leaders have acted quickly and decisively to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. The pace of change has been rapid and there is a clear determination to move the school to 'good' as quickly as possible. The school action plan is detailed and specific and clearly identifies how improvements will be monitored and evaluated. This has been fully shared with staff and governors who are clear about their role in checking that planned actions are having the required impact. Targets for pupils' achievement are more challenging and this has raised expectations of what all pupils can achieve. The introduction of progress meetings every half-term has ensured that there is a much more rigorous focus by all staff on the achievement of different groups of pupils.

Improvements to the leadership and management of teaching have included a sharper focus on the planning and delivery of lessons. Since the beginning of term, all teachers have been observed. The school now has a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Books are scrutinised frequently and weekly checks ensure that any concerns are followed up rapidly. Teachers' planning includes specific reference to how activities are matched to pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Teachers' marking is regular and helpful. The new 'purple pen' marking policy enables pupils to respond to the guidance given by teachers. This is enabling pupils to make better progress. Leaders have identified that there needs to be greater challenge in the 'next steps' pupils are expected to take and this is becoming more consistent across different classes and year groups.

Teaching assistants are able to offer more effective support to pupils because they have been given additional planning time with teachers every morning. As a result, they have a much clearer understanding of their role in improving pupils' progress. A new system for observing the quality of support provided by teaching assistants provides high-quality feedback about their performance. It details how they can improve and is linked to appropriate training opportunities.

Governors have been shown a strong commitment to bringing greater levels of challenge to school leaders and have an increasingly clear view of their own part in driving improvement. Following the last inspection, they swiftly identified the need for a much clearer focus on their understanding and scrutiny of achievement data

and took action to address this. A new achievement committee has been established to focus closely on providing challenge to school leaders. Governors are beginning to ask more probing questions about the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. They are developing their understanding of the quality of teaching and achievement over time through their participation in the school's observation and book scrutiny schedule, alongside senior leaders. They are carefully reviewing the effectiveness of the committee structure of the governing body and governor roles, as part of the external review of 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 school has been well-supported by the local authority. A senior advisor has worked closely with school leaders to monitor the implementation of key aspects of the action plan. This includes a review of achievement data at regular intervals and support for the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Training is taking place to improve governors' understanding and analysis of progress and attainment information. The Chair of the Governing Body has commissioned an external review of governance, which will provide on-going support and challenge to the governing body for the next year. Independent consultants are scheduled to provide training on making further improvements to teaching and assessment, with a specific focus on English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector