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Mrs Kerry Thomas
Headteacher
The James Cambell Primary School
Langley Crescent
Dagenham
RM9 6TD

Dear Mrs Thomas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The James Cambell Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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:

- induct new teachers to the school so that they are able to teach to a consistently good standard as quickly as possible.
- ensure that the interventions being introduced across the school are monitored carefully, to ensure they are all having an impact on raising pupil achievement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and a

representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plans and other documents were evaluated. I also joined you on a tour of the school.

Context

Significant staffing changes have taken place since the inspection. Thirteen teachers left the school at the end of the summer term. You have successfully recruited replacements to fill these posts together with the extra teaching post required as the school continues to expand. New appointments include three newly qualified teachers and two teachers who are part of the Teach First scheme.

Main findings

You are determined that the school will be judged as good or better at the next inspection and are making rapid improvements to ensure that this happens. The school action plan shows a clear understanding of your priorities and accurately identifies what improvements need to be made. It is detailed and specific, which has allowed you to regularly review the progress you are making and set further targets. The role of the governing body in supporting, monitoring and evaluating improvements is made clear. You regularly check that your own judgements are accurate by asking other professionals to assess what impact your work is having. School action plans are shared with middle leaders who are aware of their role in making sure improvements make a difference to pupil achievement. Everyone is working together to make the school good.

Effective systems for analysing information have resulted in teachers recognising how all pupils are performing. Teachers are using this information to teach lessons that take account of every pupil's needs. This has started to improve rates of progress and when progress is less than good, further interventions are made.

Professional training opportunities have been carefully planned and link closely to the needs of teachers and the action plan for the school. Middle leaders now feel they are more effective due to the high quality training they have received. This has included providing them with an opportunity to study together to improve their leadership skills on a course accredited by the National College of School Leaders (NCSL). You are already planning how they will use their new skills to coach aspiring middle leaders in the future. You are aware that the large number of new staff that started at the school in September need to be supported to teach to a high standard without delay. You have therefore forged strong links with two teaching schools who are providing further training opportunities for your new or inexperienced teachers.

Governors continue to offer strong support and challenge to school leaders. They work closely with you to ensure that the school is making the necessary

improvements in the shortest possible time. They are monitoring carefully the impact new improvements are having on the quality of teaching and learning.

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 is drawing on extensive support from the local authority and independent providers to ensure that improvements are made as quickly as possible. A wide range of interventions are targeted to support planned areas for improvement. The local authority link advisor has facilitated a number of teaching and learning reviews to focus on raising teaching standards across the school. Three reviews have taken place since January 2013 which allow senior and middle leaders to observe lessons with leaders from other schools and local authority officers. This has enabled you to check your own judgements and identify where further support is needed. Outcomes from the reviews are tracked and show that teaching standards are improving. The local authority has also provided several advisory teachers to work alongside classroom teachers to support guided reading, curriculum improvements and numeracy teaching. A number of external consultants are helping to develop the writing skills of more able learners, improve the use of questioning skills in mathematics and are reviewing how the school can expand and consolidate the wider curriculum.

School leaders are aware that the large number of new initiatives currently taking place need to be managed carefully. They are therefore targeting support to where it will be most effective and ensuring that middle leaders have the capacity to monitor what impact it is having on raising pupil achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector