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23 October 2013

Mrs Caroline Field  
Headteacher  
Menorah Foundation School  
Abbots Road  
Burnt Oak  
Edgware  
Middlesex  
HA8 0QS

Dear Mrs Field

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Menorah Foundation School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school development plan, documentation about the monitoring of teaching and information about pupils' achievement were evaluated. We discussed strengths and weaknesses in teaching as we toured the school to see pupils working in lessons.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the substantive headteacher has left the school. The senior leadership team is new, comprising of: the deputy headteacher who is currently the interim headteacher, the assistant headteacher who is the interim deputy headteacher and two key stage leaders. There are two newly qualified teachers in post.

## **Main findings**

The school is in a transitional phase with a new senior leadership team. Changes have been made to the allocation of subject responsibilities to match teachers' skills. A range of training is planned for this term and spring term 2014, which will support the senior leadership team in carrying out their role effectively.

Senior leaders responsible for different areas of the school's work are more accountable for their actions. They have increased their level of monitoring, and they have a better understanding of where attention needs to be paid to ensure further improvements are made. You have taken effective action to manage teachers' underperformance. For example, regular book reviews, classroom checks and the introduction of peer observations are presenting a more accurate view of teaching improvements and where further changes are required. Continued professional development to improve teachers' practice in raising expectations, and challenging higher attaining pupils, is having a positive impact. However, senior leaders are aware lesson observation forms need more detail about the progress of different pupils in lessons observed and over time and the need to review provision in the nursery, particularly, the health and safety aspects in the outdoor areas. You have also introduced a strong focus on literacy, for example, in pupils' grammar, handwriting and presentation in writing across the school.

All the areas for development from the previous inspection have been fully incorporated into school planning. However, some plans are not specific enough to give a precise view of how well actions are working and how senior leaders and the governing body will check that the school's actions are making a difference to pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.

The governing body is committed to securing the rapid improvement of the school. Governors are making frequent visits to gain greater understanding of the school and its progress. They report that they are able to hold the school to account more effectively than before because of the good quality information provided by the interim headteacher. Nevertheless, governors need to further develop their skills so they can ensure all statutory requirements, for example in health and safety are met, measure the school's progress on its journey to become a good school and more effectively support and challenge senior leaders.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- review and improve provision in the nursery, particularly the outdoor area
- increase the effectiveness of how well the governing body scrutinise the school's work by undertaking an external reviews of their work
- sharpen improvement plans so that they include timescales and rigorous evaluation procedures that detail how senior leaders and the governing body will check that the school's actions are making a difference to pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.

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 benefitting from good support from the local authority. Regular monitoring meetings are helping to check how quickly the school is improving and broker further support and training as necessary. The local authority adviser is providing effective training for middle and senior leaders to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and its impact on pupil achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

**Her Majesty's Inspector**