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12 November 2013

Mrs Helen Freeman  
Headteacher  
Lubavitch House School (Senior Girls)  
107-115 Stamford Hill  
London  
N16 5RP

Dear Mrs Freeman

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lubavitch House School (Senior Girls)**

Following my visit to your school on 11 November 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- refine the action plan so that it is easier to review progress at key points along the journey and to add or amend priorities if necessary
- strengthen the leadership of English by appointing well-qualified, experienced staff
- implement the findings of the external review of governance.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, the teacher of English, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plans were evaluated. Visits were made to six lessons to check the quality of marking and the impact of teachers' planning on the achievement of different groups of students.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection 14 new teachers and teaching assistants have joined the school. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed to teach English. An external review of governance has taken place.

## **Main findings**

There is a lot to do in this school. Although you have a realistic and accurate understanding of what needs to be done and governors and staff are highly committed to improvement, there are gaps in leadership that are preventing actions from being effective. You are taking on a lot yourself. The appointment of an additional senior leader to lead on key aspects of the school's work will provide more opportunities for you to delegate. However, this will not be in place until next term. Standards in English are not rising quickly enough because the school lacks an experienced, well-qualified leader of this key subject. The responsibility for the English department rests with a newly qualified teacher who is relying on the support of a part-time consultant from the local authority. Although this support is valuable and is helping to keep things going, it does not compensate adequately for the lack of a capable, permanent leader.

You are working collaboratively with the local authority improvement partner and have drawn up separate action plans. Both refer explicitly to key areas for improvement from the previous inspection report but it is not entirely clear how they align with each other. The school plan contains too many objectives and identifies short-term targets to measure improvement without showing how the actions are going to help the school improve over a longer period of time. This makes it difficult to review progress at key points along the journey and to add or amend priorities.

Although many changes have been made since becoming a state-maintained school and since the last inspection, things are not improving quickly enough because it is taking time to establish basic systems and procedures, many of which are unfamiliar to staff. Systems to record the starting points of students when they enter the school have just been introduced across the school and in the sixth form. These will allow teachers to assess the progress of individual students against targets at set times during the year. Although a positive step forward, this change has had little

impact because staff and governors have not had training in how to use the systems to measure achievement against national outcomes.

Good progress has been made in identifying the needs of students who have special educational needs and this is beginning to raise teachers' awareness and improve lesson planning. However, because teachers lack information about the prior attainment and progress of more able students and those who speak English as an additional language, these students are not always set the correct level of work in lessons. Effective action has been taken to improve marking across subjects. Students are given clear advice on what they did well and what they need to do to improve.

Procedures to manage the performance of staff are now in place and a programme to monitor the quality of teaching and learning is providing more precise feedback to teachers.

Governors are committed and keen to develop a more accurate understanding of what needs to be done; they accept that there needs to be more rapid improvement but they do not know how best to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding and to provide the necessary challenge. A thorough external review of governance has been completed recently and recommendations to restructure and define explicit roles and responsibilities have been agreed by the full governing body.

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 have established a strong partnership with the local authority and are seeking to employ an external independent consultant as an additional source of support. Teachers value the advice and guidance provided by the part-time consultants working with individual departments, and leaders benefit from the regular feedback from the improvement partner's monitoring visits. External support is increasing the school's awareness of practice in the state-maintained sector.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Education Funding Agency and the Director of Children's Services for Hackney.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**