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Donna Adkinson
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Adkinson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Middle Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 July 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:

- ensure the momentum to achieve the target of good or better judgement, remains sharply focused on pupils' achievement, particularly on: Key Stage 1, the most able pupils, those identified with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teaching assistants, a few pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and, a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan, a sample of pupils' work, minutes of governors' meeting, senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and staff appraisal were scrutinised.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, three experienced teachers have left the school. Four newly qualified teachers were appointed to the vacant posts. Two senior leaders provide extra specialist support for the most able pupils and pupils targeted for additional support. The Chair of the Governing Body has stepped down and a new Chair has been elected. Three experienced governors have formed an Executive Group to work closely with the senior leaders and local authority.

Main findings

Although the inspection judgement was a surprise, you and other senior leaders, including governors, did not delay in giving a positive response to the weaknesses identified in the inspection report. Your decisive and proactive approach is well understood and supported by leaders at all levels. Actions to tackle weaknesses are linked to a well-written action plan that is linked to a rigorous routine of monitoring and evaluation. You are very clear that quality teaching is a must and see this as non-negotiable. This is underpinned by short focused visits to lessons. You report that teaching is increasingly more consistent, particularly as leaders are working as a team and giving unified messages as a result of the increased monitoring of teaching. You are all determined to reach the former high standards, and so monitoring, including staff appraisal, has become more intense and regular. Documentation shows that monitoring is linked to a range of expectations about pupils' progress and attendance.

The clarity of vision for what must be done to drive improvement is also evident in the introduction of a new and rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress. Senior and middle leaders and teaching assistants indicated that staff are using information about pupils' progress in a focused way and have ownership of this work. Evaluation records show that information is being analysed to assess pupils' progress and, sharpen the approach to matching support to individual needs. Records of monitoring have been validated by the local authority. Evidence shows that the Executive Group is providing more challenge and holding you and other leaders to account. They are not prepared to assume that all is well unless tangible evidence is available to confirm good or better progress over time. Governors are determined to use the review of their work to increase and use their skills to demand more from you and all staff.

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 support from the local authority is now more extensive than noted in the section 5 report. The local authority's resources; time, monies, training and specialist staff, have been carefully matched to you strategic plan rather than the short term goals. The authority has been instrumental in brokering a partnership arrangement with two outstanding schools. This is enabling you to observe and tailor good practice to

the needs of your school; for instance, the development of performance management and using assessment information analytically. You and other leaders have embraced and are using the support provided to validate the monitoring of the school's progress. While the changes are fairly new, you are all very clear that the authority's work with governors and the enforced tracking system have increased accountability and leaders' confidence to drive improvement. The termly review meeting with the Director of Children's Services and other officers working with the school is also another factor that is driving you and your staff to raise and sustain standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector