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13 January 2014

Steve Gleason
Headteacher
Berger Primary School
Anderson Road
Hackney
London
E9 6HB

Dear Mr Gleason

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Berger Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 October 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:

- fully embed new senior and middle leadership roles to ensure that improvements in teaching standards and pupil outcomes are sustained
- ensure that the school action plan identifies specific monitoring roles and timescales, to allow leaders and governors to check that improvements are raising standards.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last

inspection. The school action plans were evaluated. I looked at other school improvement documents and joined you on a short tour of the school.

Context

Since the inspection you have extended the school day to provide more time to teach reading. You have introduced a new system for measuring how well pupils behave throughout the day. You have made changes to the management of Early Years and Foundation Stage and Year 1, as part of a wider review of school leadership roles. Two new teachers joined the school in January to lead specific areas of the wider curriculum and further increase your leadership capacity.

Main findings

The school action plan correctly identifies the improvements that need to be made and demonstrates that leaders have a good understanding of the necessary priorities. However, monitoring roles and timescales are not always closely linked to specific actions. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to know how effective any actions have been or check that improvements are happening quickly enough.

However, the actions you have taken are starting to take effect across the school. Pupil achievement and rates of progress improved last year. You have now analysed these results to identify where further interventions are still needed. Careful tracking of individuals and groups has allowed you to target where additional support is needed. As a result, you report that more pupils are making accelerated rates of progress.

You have started to restructure your senior and middle leadership teams so that they are empowered to make a stronger contribution to raising standards. They are working together to realign themselves with new areas of responsibility and are enthusiastic about the changes you have made. When completed, additional capacity will be created to allow all leaders to make a contribution to monitoring and supporting teaching and learning throughout the school. Additional time has been provided for them to work with each other and with their teams so that high quality lessons can be planned and taught. Training and support is carefully matched to the needs of all staff, including teaching assistants, so that the amount of good or better teaching across the school can increase.

The extension of the school day has provided more opportunities for pupils to read with teachers, each other and their parents. You report that standards in reading are starting to improve, and further initiatives are planned to escalate the rate of improvement in this area. You have introduced a new behaviour management system throughout the school and you believe that this has already had a significant impact on improving attitudes to learning.

Governors have reviewed their own skills and have participated in further training. They have aligned their own action plan with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. This is helping them to provide increasingly high levels of challenge and support to school leaders, and ensure that necessary improvements are happening more quickly.

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 part of a Trust Action Group (TAG) that meets half termly to measure the impact your actions have had. You consider that the support provided by the school improvement partner, provided through Hackney Learning Trust, has been of a high quality. She visits regularly to review the progress you are making. The school improvement partner has also assisted you in arranging other external support. This has included coaching for improving teachers, training for teachers within the Early Years Foundation Stage and developing more opportunities for teachers to network and work with staff from other schools. You are currently linking with three other primary schools on an initiative to raise reading standards in Key Stage 2 and are developing teaching links with the neighbouring secondary school.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector