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3 May 2014

Mr David Barker  
Headteacher  
Kensington Primary School  
Kensington Avenue  
London  
E12 6NN

Dear Mr Barker

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kensington Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 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 February 2014. 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.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and the one of the deputy headteachers, other teachers, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the raising achievement plan. Minutes of local authority and governing body meetings, achievement information and your records of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning were scrutinised. I visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher. During the visits, we looked at pupils' English and mathematics workbooks.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, a Year 3 teacher has left the school. One of the deputy headteachers is now teaching this class. You have restructured the leadership team

and the Governing Body has appointed a second deputy headteacher. Further restructuring of your existing staff has enabled you to release other teachers with specific responsibilities from some of their class teaching commitments. You have appointed a teacher to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.

## **Main findings**

You have rightly focused much of your work since the inspection on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although there is still some teaching that is not yet good, there is no longer any teaching that is inadequate at the school. You are focusing staff development on making sure that everybody understands the higher expectations you are setting. You have reviewed the school's behaviour policy and the way in which teachers mark pupils' work to reflect these higher expectations. Most pupils are now working in new exercise books. Work in these books show that teachers expect more of pupils and that marking is more helpful at telling pupils how to improve next time. We observed that this is not consistent in all classes.

You are using the teaching expertise of a local teaching school to implement a programme of support and challenge for less effective teaching. Your model ensures that teachers have the opportunity to learn from and observe first-hand, what effective teaching looks like and its impact on learning. You have introduced a more consistent approach to the management of behaviour in classrooms and, while this has had some success, pupils told me that there is still too much calling out and interrupting in lessons.

Recent assessments show that progress is improving. However, more now needs to be done to close the attainment gaps between various pupil groups. Achievement at the end of Year 6 looks set to be higher than in the previous year. You now need to ensure that this happens in all year groups. You have increased the frequency with which senior leaders talk to teachers about how well their pupils are doing and have ensured that teachers, senior leaders and governors have a much better understanding of pupil assessment data.

You have created a good raising achievement plan, which has been the driving force behind the improvements. However, the timescales do not extend far enough and it does not include sufficient information about actions beyond the current term. Your focus has been on developing school systems, and as a result the pace of improvement has not been as fast or as rigorous as it should be. You have waited for new appointments to be made before important actions have been taken, hindering the progress of the school. You have delegated responsibility for key areas of the plan, specifically improving the quality of teaching and learning, to other staff. You must keep a very close eye on the pace of progress in these areas, to avoid the risk of it slowing. You are working hard to keep parents informed about the changes made at school as well as how well their children are doing.

Your partnership with a local teaching school is helping to improve teaching. Each member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for overseeing the work of a year group so that all leaders have a more realistic view of what is happening in the school. Your work to improve the effectiveness of those teachers who have additional leadership responsibilities is beginning to show. This work now needs to extending to the wider group of teachers who have additional responsibilities. You are ensuring that when evaluating the quality of lessons you pay greater attention to how well pupils are learning and the impact that teaching has on this. You have not paid sufficient attention to the progress made by groups of pupils within lessons.

The minutes of meetings of the Governing Body show how effectively they are beginning to hold school leaders to account. They have introduced a raising achievement committee that meets weekly to monitor the implementation of the plan. More governors are visiting the school than previously. The Governing Body is beginning to evaluate for itself the accuracy of information provided by leaders. The external review of governance has begun. Governors are developing a much stronger understanding of how to interrogate data. They are asking more insightful questions about pupils' progress, and how quickly any attainment gaps are closing.

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**

School leaders and governors say that the local authority has provided effective support for the school and I agree. The local authority has an accurate view of the school and has recently moved it to its most vulnerable category. A National Leader of Education is providing a good level of challenge to the school leadership team. This support must not cease too quickly and has been vital in moving the school forward. The officer providing regular support to the school visits frequently and knows the school well. There are plans to review the school's progress soon. However, a more thorough review than the one planned will give a much clearer indication of whether the pace of improvement has accelerated to an acceptable level. It will also enable governors to have a much more realistic view of how well the school is doing.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Higgins  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**