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Rabbi Shmuel Karasik
Headteacher
Lubavitch Junior Boys
135 Clapton Common
Hackney
London
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Dear Rabbi Karasik

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lubavitch Junior Boys School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 January 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that actions undertaken to improve the quality of teaching are embedded consistently throughout the school
- ensure the rate of improvement is sustained as support from Hackney Learning Trust reduces from September 2014.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the executive headteacher, the associate deputy headteacher and other school leaders. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor and a representative of the local

authority to discuss actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised, including current information about pupil progress and the quality of teaching, the school self-evaluation, a selection of pupils' books and reports from the local authority. Together, we visited most classes twice, once in the morning during delivery of the Kodesh curriculum, and again in the afternoon during literacy lessons.

Main findings

The school's single action plan sets clear targets relating to each of the areas for improvement identified in the report. The plan sets realistic timescales for the implementation of actions, and identifies who will monitor progress and how impact will be evaluated. The plan does not, however, have a longer-term view of progress beyond the end of the current academic year.

Pupils are being given more opportunities to develop their writing skills as teachers delivering the Kodesh curriculum are building these into their lessons. During one such lesson we observed pupils adding punctuation to a text displayed on the interactive whiteboard. Communication between teachers is increasing resulting in shared high expectations in terms of both behaviour and standard of work.

The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is improving. Some teachers tell pupils what steps they could take to improve their work further. Pupils each have individual targets for English and mathematics, but these are not always specific enough for the pupil to know when it has been achieved. These changes are not yet consistent throughout the school.

Since the inspection you have implemented a programme of lessons to discuss the topic of bullying. These lessons include strategies for dealing with all forms of bullying, including the role of a bystander who is not involved but is aware of bullying taking place. A school council has been introduced and is already having an impact through the setting-up of a healthy snack shop and an art competition. You have observed an improvement in attitudes towards learning since the inspection, with boys increasingly engaged in lessons.

An external review of governance has been completed, and its recommendations are in place. The main recommendation of the review was that the governing body set up separate committees to oversee each of the schools within the federation. The work of each committee is now sharply focussed on the priorities for the individual school. Governors have attended training on the role of a governor, and analysis of information about pupils' progress. Governors are aware that they need to be more involved in holding school leaders to account. Hackney Learning Trust will review the work of the schools' sub-committee to evaluate the impact of the review on governance.

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 consider the ongoing support from Hackney Learning Trust to have been essential in the improvements made to the school. You have brokered support from the Trust in the form of an associate deputy headteacher who currently works two days per week in the school. She leads staff meetings and professional development for teachers and ensures that actions are taken promptly. As a member of the staff team, she has been available to provide ongoing advice and support to teachers. You have also brokered support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. You meet half-termly with the Learning Trust to ensure that your actions are having a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector