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Carmel Longley
Interim Headteacher
Glenbrook Primary School
Clarence Avenue
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London
SW4 8LD

Dear Ms Longley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Glenbrook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 June 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the emphasis given to judging the progress of all pupil groups when evaluating the quality of teaching
- sharpen the way governors check the milestones for improvement when monitoring the school action plan

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, senior leaders in the federation, members of the governing body, pupils and staff. A phone call was made to a representative of the local authority. Brief visits were made to classrooms. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including pupils' work, safeguarding information, records of governing body meetings and leaders' records to check the school's work. The school action plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, the head of school has remained on leave. The headteacher position is covered by an interim head of school seconded from within the Gipsy Hill Federation. Two teachers have returned from maternity leave and one teacher has left the school.

Main findings

Standards at Glenbrook School have been below national average for too long. In 2013 results in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests declined further. A proposal to join a local schools' federation was halted at the final stage in October 2013. The local authority and the governing body took urgent action to broker a new partnership with the Gipsy Hill Federation. The inspection report in February 2014, noted a promising start to the new leadership. Since then, the momentum has continued and the school shows strong improvement in many areas.

Pupils, staff and parents comment positively on new initiatives. Parents say it feels like a different place and that behaviour and communication has improved. Pupils are proud to wear the new blazer and uniform provided by the school. Classrooms and corridors are tidy with new displays of pupils' work, interesting artefacts and new books. Pupils say these things make them feel important and valued. Staff feel that new leaders are more open to their ideas. This is having a positive effect on staff morale and their more proactive response to working with leaders to improve the school. Time is used more efficiently by staff and pupils. Punctuality to school is checked rigorously and so it has improved. 'Early Work' during registration ensures that pupils begin learning as soon as they enter their classrooms. This shift in the ethos and culture creates an optimistic new start for the school as part of the federation.

The executive headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. The inspection outcome was no surprise and parents were already alert to the likely judgement of 'requires improvement.' Leaders moved swiftly from enhancing the environment to the core purpose of teaching and learning.

Federation leaders work alongside staff to improve teaching. Lesson plans are considerably refined so learning intentions now match pupils' abilities more closely. Leaders model effective teaching practice with these plans. They demonstrate how pupils can be challenged more robustly in every lesson and over a sequence of lessons. The Federation's marking and assessment policies are in place. Teachers implement these guidelines and this is helping greater consistency in marking. Pupils respond to this feedback, and where this is strong, the comments help pupils extend their learning and make good progress, especially in English. Other examples, in some mathematics books however, show marking with too many 'ticks' and repetition of skills such as place value. This shows that work is too easy and pupils'

progress is not as fast as it could be. The school has identified this as an area of development. The advanced skills teacher for mathematics will have additional release from her classroom duties in September to work alongside teachers to help develop projects and good teaching to develop better numeracy.

The school uses a three-weekly monitoring programme which assesses teaching and learning. The monitoring brings together evidence from observations in lessons, analysis of pupils' achievement data and their books. Leaders use this detailed information to check the school's progress against the priorities in the school action plan. Leaders' reports state that teaching, because of this intensive support, has improved significantly with a high proportion that is now good and outstanding. Whilst there is no doubt that the quality of teaching has improved rapidly with much that is now consistently good, this judgement is too generous. A greater emphasis upon seeking out the progress of all groups of pupils, especially those identified as underperforming, will generate a more accurate picture of their progress over time.

The governing body are experienced. They know the school well and challenge the signs of decline. The fall in Year 6 attainment in 2013 was the final catalyst for action. They worked closely with the local authority so difficult decisions about the performance of the school were tackled with recourse to formal staff capability and disciplinary procedures when required. As a result, they fulfil their strategic function and responsibilities highly effectively. Governors check that the new federation is raising standards and improving the school quickly through their monitoring and challenging discussions with school leaders. Governors' monitoring is not sharp enough however in using the milestones in the action plan to check how well the school is doing against tight deadlines.

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 local authority acted swiftly with the governing body to address poor achievement and leadership. They brokered support from the partnership with the Gipsy Hill Federation to secure a solution for the future of the school at a critical time. The local authority use specialist school improvement support teams to ensure that the last remaining aspects of ineffective practice are resolved.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono

Her Majesty's Inspector