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Emma Appelby  
Headteacher  
West Acton Primary School  
Noel Road  
Acton  
London  
W3 0JL

Dear Mrs Appelby

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Acton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 September 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 June 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:

- include greater detail in its plans about performance goals at key points during the year so that governors, in particular, can check on the rate of progress
- ensure that governors have a thorough understanding of the numerical information about pupils' progress so that they can hold the school to account more effectively.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, pupils, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plans were evaluated. We made short visits to each classroom and looked at a sample of pupils' work in their books.

## **Context**

Since the inspection six teachers have left the school and several new appointments have been made. Following a review of the leadership structure, all posts are now filled. The leadership team comprises the headteacher, two deputy heads, the teacher responsible for coordinating arrangements for pupils with special education needs and three assistant headteachers. A 'reading champion' has been appointed to lead the school's work in developing reading. Eight teachers started work at the school this academic year including those specialising in French, music and physical education. Several changes to the personnel leading subjects have taken place.

## **Main findings**

The newly formed leadership team has made a determined start in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection. Since the beginning of term, leaders have acted quickly to increase the level of challenge and support they provide for teachers. They skilfully balance the need to make progress quickly, with the need to ensure that teachers new to the school are inducted effectively. Leaders visit classrooms more frequently providing focused feedback to teachers, pinpointing areas for development as well as identifying strengths; this is welcomed by teachers.

The school's action plans are detailed, with separate documents for each of the key areas of development. Planned actions address the areas for improvement listed in the inspection report as well as other school priorities. Those leading each development are clearly identified as is the intended impact. Further detail should be added to make it clear what is expected by key points during the year. This will help leaders and governors to check that progress is being made rapidly enough.

Recent staff training has provided support for the teaching of mathematics and reading. Training has also been provided to improve the quality of questions teachers ask pupils during lessons. As a result pupils are now expected to think more deeply about the concepts they are studying. While planning their lessons, teachers identify questions to challenge pupils of different abilities, including the more able.

The newly appointed 'reading champion' ensures that reading remains a focus for the whole school community. The recently launched 'reading record', is a vehicle for

recording the books pupils have read, and also incorporates a range of activities to support the development of reading skills. Activities include creating profiles of characters and collecting useful phrases which can be later applied to pupils' own writing. Leaders have clarified their expectations of the teaching of reading and are working to ensure that there is a consistent approach throughout the school. Teachers now plan opportunities for pupils to develop reading skills in other subjects. Similarly teachers have raised their expectations of pupils' writing in subjects other than in English. They are expected to challenge poor presentation and grammar wherever they come across it in pupils' work.

Teachers have received training to support them in developing pupils' application of mathematics skills. There is a renewed focus on making sure that pupils understand concepts fully so that subsequent work builds on a firm foundation. Activities which require pupils to apply their mathematics skills are now regular features of the weekly timetable. Teachers take opportunities to incorporate mathematics within other subjects. However, they should ensure that these activities are at an appropriate level to advance pupils' mathematical understanding.

Alongside a review of the topics pupils study in each year, subject leadership arrangements have been reviewed. Leaders of subjects have been selected based on their expertise and interests so that their experience and knowledge can be put to good use.

Pupils say their lessons are now more focused and that they are clear about what they are expected to learn. Older pupils explain that they are expected to take more responsibility for their work, for example, by using a dictionary to correct spelling mistakes. Pupils' books are marked regularly and teachers' comments identify where pupils have been successful, as well as how their work can be improved. Teachers provide pupils with daily opportunities to respond to the comments they have made in their books. Although early in the year, there is evidence that the additional work pupils do in response to teachers' marking is having an impact; pupils are increasingly able to apply what they have learnt, in subsequent work.

Governors are familiar with the school's key issues and are becoming more proactive in their approach. Following a review of their effectiveness, they have identified areas in which their practice can be developed, enabling them to hold leaders to account more effectively. This includes increasing their understanding of school performance data. They are also establishing systems to ensure that they can respond more quickly when they receive information requiring action.

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 adviser linked with the school has provided effective support for leaders. She has supported them in establishing the roles and responsibilities of the new leadership team and has contributed to the development planning process. Future involvement with the school has been agreed which will include providing external validation of leaders' judgements.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes

**Her Majesty's Inspector**