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5 November 2014

Mr 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 5 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 second 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. Following a monitoring visit in January 2014, the school was judged to be taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the section 5 inspection.

This inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted. A serious incident that occurred at the school since the previous monitoring visit is being investigated by the governing body. During this inspection the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements were evaluated according to the *School inspection handbook (September 2014)*.

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 communication links so that parents know how the school is supporting the learning of their children and keeping them safe

- update the school's child protection policy to better reflect the *Keeping children safe in education* guidance, issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2014.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, a group of senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since my last visit. I scrutinised school improvement documents and inspected safeguarding arrangements.

## **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit the school has appointed three assistant headteachers. One new classroom teacher joined the school in September 2014 to fill an existing vacancy.

## **Main findings**

The school action plan is now more sharply focussed on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report from October 2013. Timescales and monitoring roles have been added. Governors, leaders and teachers use the action plan as a central document to help them check the progress that is being made towards improvements. Leaders have a thorough understanding of which interventions are helping the school improve. They check the impact of new actions robustly. For example, they check how successful teaching interventions have been by asking teachers to provide regular evaluations of successful learning activities.

Your senior leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of three assistant headteachers with specific areas of responsibility. This has created extra time for you and your deputy to plan further improvements and hold all leaders strongly to account for meeting targets. All senior leaders, including you, have a regular teaching commitment and can model effective teaching strategies. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving throughout the school.

Pupils' attainment in 2014 improved overall but inconsistencies in the achievement of different groups and subjects remain. Key Stage 2 pupils achieved more highly in writing and mathematics than they did in reading. Raising reading standards throughout the school remains a priority. To address this leaders are reviewing how reading is taught. A new library is being developed and a number of cross-curricular reading initiatives are planned.

Teachers plan and evaluate their lessons to check that learning activities are pitched at the correct level. When individual rates of progress are too slow this is recognised and appropriate adjustments made. More able pupils are provided with activities that help them make accelerated rates of progress and encourage high levels of engagement.

You have worked hard to improve communication with parents by holding question and answer sessions to address any concerns and keep them well informed about improvements at the school. Parents know who to contact so that any worries are addressed as quickly as possible. They have received advice to help them read with their children and guidance about how to keep their children safe when using the internet at home.

Behaviour and safety are continuing to improve as new policies and procedures become firmly embedded. For example, the behaviour policy is now applied consistently by all staff across the school. Exclusions increased last year, as a result of new procedures to address poor behaviour, but have reduced significantly this term. The number of reported behaviour incidents has also reduced. Attendance has improved and is now above average.

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The leadership and management of safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that necessary checks are made on all adults working at the school who have unsupervised access to pupils. The school has appropriate systems for monitoring and supporting vulnerable pupils, as evidenced by its detailed and well maintained care plans. Child protection and first aid training has been undertaken by staff and updated at the required intervals. However, the school's child protection policy needs to be updated to reflect the new statutory guidance that was issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in April this year.

The governing body holds school leaders to account for the improvements that need to be made. Immediate action was taken by governors following the recent serious incident. They have commissioned an external investigation, which was taking place at the time of this monitoring visit.

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 continues to provide strong support to the school. They hold leaders and governors to account for making rapid improvements. The regular Trust Action Group (TAG) meetings review the progress being made and are attended by school leaders, including governors. A teaching and learning review was carried out

in June 2014 to support leaders with improving the school. This rightly confirmed that the school is continuing to improve. As a result, the level of external monitoring has been reduced and the school improvement partner now makes termly visits. New senior leaders and the governing body have received effective support to help them become more confident in their monitoring roles. The local authority provided immediate support to help the school manage the recent serious incident. They have helped governors to appointment an independent consultant to carry out the external investigation.

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**