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3 February 2015

Mrs Linda Ewers
Headteacher
Olga Primary School
Lanfranc Road
Bow
London
E3 5DN

Dear Mrs Ewers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Olga Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2015, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 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 school improvement plan by identifying regular milestones, so that progress and attainment can be measured regularly and precisely
- recruit an Early Years leader as a matter of urgency
- carry out an external review of the Governing Body.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with leaders, including you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the

last inspection. I observed jointly with you, teaching and learning in lessons and in pupils' books. I examined the review of the pupil premium funding and evaluated the school action plan. I also looked at the most recent headteacher's report to the governors, and job descriptions for senior leaders.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the Year 1 teacher and Early Years leader have left the school. Both posts remain vacant. One of the deputy headteachers currently has responsibility for most of the teaching in Year 1. The school has appointed a new nursery teacher. The two deputy headteachers and the assistant headteachers were made substantive leaders in January 2015.

Main findings

You have stabilised the staffing structure and have made the temporary senior leaders posts permanent. They relish the fact that both you and governors hold them fully to account for the impact of their work, which is raising the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. They are highly motivated to make sure that your vision, which is that everyone can succeed, is achieved. You have strengthened the capacity of leaders, providing them with time to monitor and evaluate the work of staff well.

You explained to me how much of your work is focused on rapidly improving the quality of teaching. The teachers that I spoke to confirmed the increased scrutiny of their work from you and other senior leaders. They appreciate the training they have, as well as the honest and regular feedback they receive, which pinpoints precisely what they need to do to improve. You have created a team who are confident that they will receive the support they need to improve their practice. You deploy the expertise of senior leaders well to model and coach those teachers who need additional support and guidance.

Observations demonstrate that pupils are engaged in their learning and have positive attitudes. Whole school training on assessment techniques is clearly having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Work in books shows that progress is beginning to accelerate, particularly in writing in most year groups. Work is usually pitched accurately so that different groups of pupils are now making better progress, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils. Pupils told me that they love writing and their work shows that they are now inspired to write creatively. Marking is improving and usually informs pupils on what they need to do better. Recent training for teaching assistants has improved the quality of their intervention work and their effectiveness in class. They now spend time with teachers to discuss the quality of pupils' learning and progress, which better informs future planning. They too are held to account for their work through the appraisal cycle.

You have written a new action plan in response to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have set challenging targets for all ability groups but you have not clarified clear milestones to measure progress at regular intervals. From the rigour of your monitoring, all leaders, including the governing body have a good grasp about the progress different groups of pupils are making. The pupil premium funding is now being used wisely to boost these pupils' progress through a range of interventions, as well as improved teaching in lessons. The overview of how this funding is to be spent and the impact it should have are well planned for.

In the early years you have successfully appointed a new nursery teacher, who has settled well into her role. You are still working to recruit an effective early year's leader, as well as a Year 1 teacher. As temporary measure, a deputy headteacher has most of the teaching responsibility for this class. You and governors are determined to make sure that you recruit only the best teachers but these vacancies need to be filled as a matter of urgency.

Although governors have not yet had the recommended external review, from their discussion with me it is obvious that they are well informed about the school's performance. Scrutiny of governor meeting minutes shows that they are asking more challenging questions. This is because they are better informed. The governing body has been re-structured and there has been a deliberate and successful move to secure expertise within the governing body to bolster the effectiveness of their roles and responsibilities.

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 school is being well supported by the local authority. Local authority officers provide effective support in a range of specific areas. They have brokered a partnership with two outstanding schools to make sure that the school's effectiveness improves. Officers meet twice a term with leaders to monitor the work of the school towards the areas for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Her Majesty's Inspector