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27 February 2015

Ms Davindar Bhalla
Headteacher
Starks Field Primary School
167 Church Street
Edmonton
Enfield
N9 9SJ

Dear Ms Bhalla

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Starks Field Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 February, 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 May 2013. 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:

- continue to eradicate any teaching that is less than good so that pupils make at least good progress in all classes and subjects
- ensure that teachers accurately assess what pupils have achieved so that gaps in their understanding can be identified and addressed quickly.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, a group of senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the improvements made since my last visit. I reviewed the school

development plan along with other documents demonstrating the school's work, including the single central record of employment checks. I joined you on a visit to all classes where we looked at books and spoke to pupils informally about their work.

Context

Since my last visit further staff changes have taken place. After several unsuccessful attempts to recruit to the post, you have recently appointed a deputy headteacher who will join the school in the summer term. An interim postholder has been in place since September 2013 and will liaise with the new appointment to ensure a smooth transition takes place. A new assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2014. One teaching post is currently filled by a temporary post holder. An external review of governance was started following the first monitoring visit in July 2013 and has been now been completed.

Main findings

Teaching standards at the school have continued to improve as a result of improved monitoring and further opportunities for targeted professional development. You are evaluating teaching over time using a range of measures that include regular book scrutinies and checks on teachers' planning. Your systems for tracking and monitoring pupil's assessment have improved. You are now working with the local authority to ensure that all teachers are able to accurately assess how much progress pupils have made from their starting points. Additionally, opportunities for moderating pupils' work across different groups and classes have been provided. You have identified where gaps in learning still exist, such as in some Key Stage 1 classes, and have arranged for further teaching interventions to be put in place where necessary.

Teachers are providing regular marking and feedback to pupils who are encouraged to respond to the advice they have been given. Due to a strong focus on improving mathematical skills, pupils are making better progress in this subject across the school. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils now achieve results that are similar to other subjects and comparable to other schools. You are ensuring that Year 6 pupils are able to catch up quickly by addressing any gaps in their learning and regularly reviewing how they are taught.

Despite further changes to your senior leadership team you have continued to improve your monitoring and accountability systems and improvements have proceeded without delay. For example, you have improved communication links with parents by inviting them into the school to discuss their child's progress on a more regular basis. This has allowed you to address any areas of concern, such as attendance, more quickly. As a result, pupils are attending more regularly and when absence is an issue, it is followed up quickly. The impact of this work can be seen in your most recent survey which shows enhanced levels of parental satisfaction.

Governors were slow to commission an external review of governance but this has now been completed. The recommendations have started to be implemented and governors have benefitted from additional training. Some parent governors visit the school on a regular basis and carry out their responsibilities diligently. All governors now have clearly defined roles which are linked to specific areas of the school's work. Governing body minutes show that they ask challenging questions and have a firm grasp on achievement information to help them know how much progress pupils are making. They increasingly hold school leaders to account for implementing the actions within the school improvement plan.

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 you with effective support. It has assisted you in appointing a consultant to help improve the teaching of mathematics and worked with teachers to moderate the quality of pupils' work. Additional support has been provided to teachers with specific responsibilities, such as teaching pupils with English as a second language. Local authority officers are currently undertaking a thorough review of the school's effectiveness which will be completed by the end of this term. This will assist you in ensuring that assessments are accurate and that pupils are making good progress across all classes and Key Stages.

New governors have received training provided by the local authority which has helped them to be more effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. The school improvement advisor provides an annual report to governors informed by her regular visits to the school. You are part of a local partnership of other schools which require improvement and attend termly meetings to support and challenge each other in your journey to good.

A national leader of governance has completed the external review of the governing body and identified further actions to be taken. You and other senior leaders have been supported by the headteacher and leaders from another local school. This has helped you to share good practice across both schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox

Her Majesty's Inspector