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Stephen O'Brien
Hoxton Garden Primary School
Ivy Street
Hackney
London
N1 5JD

Dear Mr O'Brien

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hoxton Garden Primary

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 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:

- ensure that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are applied with absolute consistency and rigour.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with another local authority officer. The school's action plan was evaluated. Together, we made short visits to classes in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6. I scrutinised information about the achievement of pupils in these year groups and looked at a sample of their books. I examined a range of documents including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the safer recruitment of staff. I also considered checks made on the quality of teaching, and information about visits from local authority officers.

Context

Since my last visit, three teachers have left the school and replacements have been recruited from the partnership schools (Orchard Primary School and Southwold Primary School). A second Reception class opened in January 2015 due to the increasing number of admissions in this year group. The governing body has been strengthened and now has ten members.

Main findings

Following my last visit, you extended the school's action plan. It now includes details of the checks made on the progress made in addressing the areas for improvement. You are also recording the findings of these checks. As a result, those evaluating the school's progress have a clearer idea of what is working well, and what needs further input.

You have implemented a system which carefully and regularly tracks pupils' achievement. Rigorous analysis of this information enables leaders to identify any gaps in achievement for groups of pupils and act swiftly to address them. Leaders ensure that judgments made by teachers about pupil achievement are accurate through working alongside professionals from within the partnership schools and further afield. As a result of this work, and continued improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils are making up lost ground. Their rates of progress are increasing.

Since taking on responsibility for the school, the executive headteacher and yourself have reviewed and revised all policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Robust policies and procedures are in place which have regard to the most recent legislation and guidance. The school has not, however, always applied these procedures with absolute rigour. For example, while staff attendance at training about child protection was recorded thoroughly, the school did not ensure that those who could not attend received this important information.

Nevertheless, where safeguarding concerns have been raised, these have been dealt with robustly. The school has taken an open and transparent approach when working with other professionals. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have received training relevant to this aspect of their role. Appropriate senior staff and governors have received training in safer recruitment.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school receives effective support from both the Hackney Learning Trust and through partnership arrangements with two other primary schools. Hackney Learning Trust officers meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss improvements made in the school and ensure that these are having sufficient impact on outcomes for pupils. Teachers from the partnership schools work alongside their counterparts in this school to develop the skills of teachers and middle leaders. Governors also commission bespoke consultancy from external consultants in order to be sure that improvements are secure. External consultants have also been charged with assessing the effectiveness of other strategies, such as assessment. This has all provided significant support and challenge to the leadership team.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, Hackney Learning Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Hackney.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector