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28 April 2015

Mrs Flynn and Mrs Bhangra  
Hartley Primary School  
Hartley Avenue  
East Ham  
London  
E6 1NT

Dear Mrs Flynn and Mrs Bhangra

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hartley Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2015. 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:

- refine the action plan so that it includes clear milestones and success criteria related to pupil achievement, against which the impact of actions can be systematically monitored and evaluated
- set challenging targets for the most able pupils so that a higher proportion of them achieve the higher levels in both key stages in all core subjects
- raise both adult and pupil expectations for the presentation of work and insist that all staff write clearly and legibly at all times.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the two acting headteachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the Governing Body, including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. In addition I spoke with a National Leader of Education (NLE) who is providing support to school leaders. I

made brief visits to classes and looked at documentation, including information about pupils' attainment and progress.

## **Context**

Since the school's previous section 5 inspection, the two acting headteachers continue to lead the school following the departure of the headteacher. They continue to be supported by the headteacher of Upton Cross Primary School who is a National Leader of Education (NLE). The local authority is currently supporting the governing body in securing a permanent long-term solution for the leadership of the school. The Chair of the Governing Body resigned in the Spring term. The Vice Chair was appointed Chair soon after.

## **Main findings**

You, together with other school leaders, including the governing body have made sure that an action plan is in place. This covers all the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last full inspection. Appropriate actions to bring about these improvements are being implemented. However, the plan does not provide precise or measurable targets for each area of improvement based on pupil progress. There are no regular checks or milestones on the progress made towards these targets. Consequently, leaders, including governors do not know whether progress is sufficiently rapid enough.

Despite this lack of detail in the action plan, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have clearly benefitted from the support from the NLE, who has strengthened the rigour and accuracy of your judgements for the quality of teaching. This, together with regular internal moderation and external checks with a number of other local schools, has secured accurate assessments. Monitoring information is enabling you to be diagnostic about what teachers need to work on to improve their practice. The assessment leader is collating achievement data well so that all staff have insight into how well pupils are achieving. This information identifies those pupils who are on track to achieve their targets, and those who are potentially at risk of underachievement. Interventions are quickly put in place to boost pupil progress further. Nevertheless, the progress of the more able pupils is not checked well enough, and you are not confident that this group of pupils are making accelerated progress. More able pupils are not set challenging targets to make sure that more achieve the higher levels in both key stages.

The quality of teaching is improving. You have secured intensive support and coaching for teachers. This includes the expertise of the Key Stage 2 phase leader, an external consultant and through peer mentoring with good or better teachers from Upton Cross Primary school. Weaker teachers have and will continue to benefit from intervention programmes. There is a shared drive and determination to improve the quality of teaching by all staff in order to resolve weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Consequently there have been some quick but effective strategies to secure better rates of pupil progress. For example, as a result of recent training, teachers now plan to ask open ended questions to deepen and extend pupils' learning. Successful implementation of this was evident in the observations I made with you during this monitoring visit.

Most teachers are applying the revised and improved marking policy consistently. They provide good feedback to pupils on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. Work in pupils' books and pupil progress data confirm how progress is

beginning to pick up across Key Stage 1 in both English and mathematics. Nonetheless, progress remains inconsistent across the school and is slower in some Key Stage 2 classes, especially in writing. You agreed with me that the presentation of work in both English and mathematics is poor in some year groups. Both adults and pupils do not always have high enough expectations for the presentation of work. There is a general lack of pride. Teachers are not always good role models as their handwriting is sometimes untidy.

In addition to the key areas of improvement identified at the last inspection, you have prioritised strengthening the role of teaching assistants, so that they are better able to support, promote and extend pupils' learning. Their work with the NLE has helped them to refine their role. They have clear expectations and responsibilities and they now feel more involved in pupils' learning.

Leaders at all levels explained that they feel empowered and motivated to take control of their areas of responsibility. For example, the lead phonics teacher has worked closely with external consultants to sharpen up how phonics is taught. She has worked with teachers to make sure that activities are tailored to challenge the different abilities groups as a result of rigorous monitoring and assessments. This is having a positive impact on pupils' literacy skills. Likewise, pupils are now taught in ability groups for mathematics. Teachers plan activities with greater precision so that pupils have to think hard about their learning. Governors are knowledgeable and provide good support and strong challenge. Minutes of governing body meetings show that they do not take what they are told at face value. They ask probing questions and request further evidence on a range of issues to hold you and all leaders to account for their work.

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 local authority brokered the support of a local NLE, which is a significant driver for school improvement, particularly in strengthening leader's capacity to move the school forward. Teachers and leaders are benefiting from opportunities to observe effective teaching and learning and to work alongside colleagues in the NLE school. The Progress Board meets regularly to review the progress made against the recommendations from the previous report. Members include a local authority representative, two members of the governing body and senior leaders. This is making sure that the school stays on track to improve at a good rate.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Newham and as below.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

**Her Majesty's Inspector**