

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



26 October 2015

Mr Daniel Kerbel
Headteacher
Earlham Primary School
Earlham Grove
Wood Green
London
N22 5HJ

Dear Mr Kerbel

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Earlham Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 October 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 May 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in May 2015 the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are at the early stage of taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection: In order to become a good school:

- ensure that all actions in the school development plan are fully implemented
- establish a permanent senior leadership team so that the foundation for change can be built on and sustained.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, and other senior and middle leaders, teaching assistants, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and other documents were scrutinised. These included minutes of governors' meetings, pupils' results in the recent 2015 national curriculum tests, attendance records and the local

authority's record of a visit to the school. I also visited a few lessons with you to look at the quality of pupils' work and marking.

Context

Following the last inspection, plans were put into place to appoint a permanent headteacher. The school experienced a turbulent few years when staffing was unstable and senior leaders were mostly temporary. The future status of the school was also being considered. The interim senior leaders both left the school in August 2015. You took up the permanent position at the start of the current school year. Prior to taking up the appointment, you were in contact with the school and had started to develop a number of plans to drive change. Two assistant headteachers with specific remits were also appointed on temporary contracts, each for one year. Further appointments include five newly qualified teachers and an experienced middle leader. All key senior appointments are now in place.

Main findings

Since the start of the new school year, rapid changes have taken place. These are linked to your preliminary plans started in the summer term 2015. You received a lot of good-quality support from the local authority and governing body to ensure that you could take up the appointment earlier than planned. Your early start has benefited the school. Nevertheless, although you are very well supported by a very experienced senior team, the transient status does not reassure staff and parents that stability will be the norm. You and the IEB are aware that the current position cannot be allowed to destabilise the process of rapid change.

The staff have come to terms with the inspection judgement and everyone that I spoke to was very clear that 'the pupils deserve better'. Consequently, our discussions indicated that you took up this appointment with a clear mission to make this school good or better. You have given the staff a clear outline of your vision for the school and have not wasted time to introduce changes. As a result of your determined approach, all members of staff who spoke to me indicated that they understand your vision. All are aware that the school cannot remain in its current state, and the only inspection judgement expected is 'Good'. They know the consequences if this is not achieved.

While the impact of the recent changes cannot be fully measured at this stage, there is an increasing urgency to drive change. This is evident in the recent improved national test results. However, you all recognise that this rising trend is still not good enough because the rates of progress are not rapid. With the support of the senior and middle leaders, you have made a very quick start to developing teaching. Within a very short time, staff have been made aware of your robust approach. Despite the increased monitoring, you have skilfully elicited their support. In addition, you have made sure that staff can use the new assessment system. More training is planned to sharpen their focus on using assessment to meet the needs of pupils better. You have also increased accountability for pupils' achievement by introducing the phase system. Staff spoken to welcomed this new approach to develop their skills. The

quality of marking is much improved. The introduction of philosophy to increase pupils' thinking and questioning skills has had a positive impact. Pupils told me that they are now thinking more widely and critically about their work.

Attendance is much improved and is currently above average. As a result of increasing the education welfare officer's time, there is more engagement with parents and cases can be followed through. You indicated that steps have also been taken to track pupils who are abroad. You have also taken a firm stance against granting extended holidays in term time and parents are in no doubt that their child will be taken off roll if this is done.

You have commissioned the pupil premium review, which is planned for October 2015. Middle leaders have begun to seek out and work with good or outstanding practitioners and more work is planned to develop their leadership skills. The action plan is fit for purpose and remains a working document. You are all aware that the plan does not include the targets for improving teaching and clear timelines and milestones for all actions. The IEB is clear about the priorities and is working closely with you to speed up the process of change. Members of the board know about school improvement and are using their experience and skills to keep the school under review; each member is linked to an area of the school's 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's supportive approach during the turbulent period has continued. It has been decisive and instrumental in helping to create stability through the appointments of the previous leadership team and the IEB. The local authority has brokered arrangements for your school to work with outstanding practitioners, locally and in the London borough of Enfield. The school improvement adviser is working closely with you and staff by providing support, training and challenge. For example, training is planned for the middle leaders. The local authority has expressed its confidence in you and your senior leadership team to turn the school around quickly. Consequently, it has worked out its exit strategy. In the interim period the project board, made up of local authority officers, will continue to challenge you and your team about the school's effectiveness.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Haringey local authority.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector