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29 September 2017

Jim McLucas  
Headteacher Designate  
Monega Primary School  
Monega Road  
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London  
E12 6TT

Dear Mr McLucas

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Monega Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2017 with Matt Tiplin, HMI, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

The first monitoring visit focused on the school's arrangements for safeguarding. It also looked at the progress governors and leaders have made in moving the school forward, since the last inspection. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the chair of governors, and all senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with teachers and teaching assistants. A discussion took place with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and observed pupils at breaktimes and in classrooms. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding and to the plans leaders have in place to address the areas for improvement that were outlined at the time of the inspection.

The local authority's statement of action plan was evaluated prior to the inspection. The school's improvement plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there has been a lack of consistent senior leadership and governance in the school. Following the inspection, an interim headteacher was appointed by the local authority and remained in post until the end of August 2016. After the inspection, the whole governing body resigned. In May 2016, a new governing body was formed, with a skilled and experienced chair who took up post in May 2016. The regional schools commissioner selected The Boleyn Trust to become the preferred sponsor to the school. In September 2017, an executive headteacher was appointed from the trust and a headteacher designate is in post. The trust has put in place a 'rapid response' team of senior and middle leaders.

The school is due to convert to academy status and become part of The Boleyn Trust on 1 November 2017.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Initially, the interim headteacher took effective action to ensure that issues raised with regard to safeguarding were tackled. However, too much time was spent on securing further external reviews on the effectiveness of safeguarding, which served only to confirm priorities which had been established by Ofsted. Therefore, actions taken to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report were stalled. After her appointment in May 2016, the new chair of governors quickly and efficiently ensured that swift action was taken by governors to ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements were met.

When the executive headteacher, headteacher designate and the rapid response team joined the school at the start of this term, their actions built on the effective work of the governors. They were swift and effective in ensuring that key actions were put in place to safeguard children and to move the school forward with all the areas for improvement outlined in the inspection report.

A strong culture of safeguarding has swiftly been established in the school. Staff have received appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding. Teachers and teaching assistants now talk confidently about their understanding of the potential risks children face and they know how to look for signs of radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation. Staff understand the current referral system and report that there is now absolute clarity regarding how they report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. Staff are vigilant and care deeply about helping to keep the children in their care safe. The chair of governors has expert knowledge of child protection and safeguarding issues which she is sharing with the newly constituted governing body. She is ensuring that governors receive relevant training.

During the inspection, parents who spoke to inspectors raised no concerns

regarding pupils' safety. There were 49 responses to the online survey Parent View where all stated that their child was kept safe at school. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for.

Leaders have ensured that all necessary pre-employment checks meet statutory requirements. They have reorganised personnel files to ensure that they are easily accessible and they have ensured that any gaps in records which were discovered at the time of the previous inspection have now been filled.

The new leadership team recognises that actions taken to improve attendance since the previous inspection have not been effective. Attendance remains below national expectations. Although attendance is tracked effectively, actions taken to follow up poor attendance in relation to vulnerable pupils are not. Actions taken to reduce the number of term-time holidays have also been ineffective. The new leadership team has planned appropriate actions to tackle these weaknesses.

A review of governance was not undertaken following the previous inspection as all the governors resigned. The chair of governors intends to review the effectiveness of the reconstituted governing body when the new governors are fully trained and established in their roles.

Pupils' achievement was not a specific focus for this monitoring visit. However, leaders were keen to show inspectors their rigorous action plans in response to the decline in the standards achieved in national tests by Year 6 pupils, in 2017. Leaders have quickly developed a good understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and performance management is sharply focused on ensuring that pupils in every year group make strong, sustained progress.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. Staff and parents are responding well to the new leadership team. As one member of staff commented, reflecting the views of others, 'we know who's in charge now and we know what we're doing'.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose. However, it would benefit from refining in terms identifying specific timescales for each action. Leaders agree that it would also be helpful to evaluate actions as they are put in place to ensure that leaders chart and celebrate the rapid improvements that they are making.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner

**Her Majesty's Inspector**