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Miss Rehana Ali
Headteacher
Stamford Hill Primary School
Berkeley Road
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Dear Miss Ali

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Stamford Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school with Gary Rawlings, Her Majesty's Inspector, on 16–17 December 2019, 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 November 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2018.

- Improve the quality of teaching, and consequently outcomes for pupils, by making sure that:
 - teachers use information about what pupils know to inform the next steps in their learning
 - feedback on pupils' written work is useful
 - teachers continue to access high-quality professional development to improve their teaching.
- Improve the quality and provision for reading, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are guided to choose books that are suitable for their age and stage of development
 - making sure that pupils read regularly, and that systems for recording and checking on progress in reading are effectively used.
- Improve governance, by:
 - building on recent improvements to the quality of governance so that governors better hold leaders to account for the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of provision and the investment and impact of additional funding
 - quickly resolve plans for the long-term future leadership of the school.
- Improve the partnership with parents and carers, by:
 - providing regular and reliable information about their children's progress and about how they can help with learning at home.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 16–17 December 2019

Evidence

The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you, the part-time deputy headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, subject leaders, a representative of the local authority and the chair of the interim executive board (IEB). Inspectors visited some lessons and spoke with groups of pupils. The inspectors spoke informally with parents and carers at the start of the day.

Context

Since the last inspection in November 2018, the interim headteacher has left the school. The governing body has been disbanded and replaced by an IEB. Having previously been the school's deputy headteacher you are now acting headteacher. The new deputy headteacher has been recruited on a part-time, temporary basis and fulfils the role of special educational needs coordinator. Since September 2019, you have been supported by a school improvement partner from the local authority.

Since the last inspection the local authority has made several proposals, including: that the school forms a federation with other schools; that the school amalgamates with another school; and, most recently, a likely closure at the end of this academic year. These proposals came about at three separate times since the last inspection and caused unrest. This had led to significant turbulence in staffing and the number of pupils has reduced by nearly half.

Since last inspection, provision for two-year-old children has been amalgamated with the Nursery. At the time of this inspection, there were no pupils on roll in Year 2. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 have been combined into one class.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

At the time of the last inspection, teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes were judged to be inadequate. Parents agreed. Inspectors noted that pupils' reading and writing skills were not as strong as they should be. Inspectors also found that sometimes the most able pupils were not challenged to achieve as highly as they could. Leaders' work to address these areas is in the early stages. However, some improvements in reading and writing have been made. The phonics programme is in place and taught consistently in early years and Year 1. The programme is enabling pupils to rehearse, practise and apply phonics well to reading and writing. Leaders are working effectively to develop the joy of reading, through visiting authors and story telling sessions. Work in books shows that the intended national curriculum for reading is being covered. Pupils explore different genres and respond to texts through character descriptions, for example.

Leaders are now starting to focus on making further improvements to writing and for the most able pupils in mathematics. They are using expert advice from local schools, external specialists and the local authority to help raise pupils' outcomes further. Teachers are starting to trial some new ideas for teaching in the classroom. Leaders have wisely begun to check how well these new ideas are working, although it is too early to see the impact of this. Leaders understand the importance of a continual focus on making sure that they are improving outcomes for pupils of all abilities. They also recognise that it is particularly important to ensure that any changes to the teaching of mathematics are well thought through.

Leaders' plans for improving the wider curriculum are in the early stages of development. Leaders are wisely starting to consider how to organise subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds across the curriculum during the time they are in the school. Staff are receptive to the new ideas and excited to develop the curriculum further. High-quality support and training in areas such as senior leadership, subject development and early reading has been sourced by leaders. This has been well received by staff and is making a difference in improving the quality of education across the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management at the school

The weaknesses in governance identified in the previous inspection have been resolved. The local authority quickly appointed an IEB. These new members have the right combination of knowledge and skills to oversee the rapid improvement needed.

The IEB is offering high levels of challenge and holding leaders to account for the quality of education. Governors are now discharging their statutory duties, understand the impact of additional funding and, despite the uncertainty around the school's future, have secured effective leadership through the appointment of the acting headteacher.

Leaders demonstrate a determination and clarity of purpose which is already bringing about a shift in culture of the school. Leaders feel very well supported by the chair of the IEB and the local authority school improvement partner and welcome the challenge they provide.

After the last inspection, leaders and governors recognised that urgent changes to the school were necessary. They have shown determination in tackling the areas of weakness found. The statement of action that leaders produced is fit for purpose. Leaders use this alongside their own improvement plans to check that they are working on the right things to improve the school. This is working well.

Governors are mindful of leaders' workload. They understand the need to ensure that improvements are sustainable and become part of the embedded culture of the

school regardless of its future. They are managing carefully and sensibly the consultation process relating to the future of the school.

Leaders have quickly set about re-establishing the school's reputation within the local and wider community. Parents remain positive about the school's performance but saddened by its potential closure. Several told the inspectors that their children are learning well and feel safe in school. Staff report that morale has improved because they feel valued and that there is a more cohesive and clear approach from school leaders. Staff appreciate the way in which they now work as a team. Expectations are clear, and they feel well supported through the wider professional development opportunities that are being made available to them.

The effective development of temporary staff is supporting you well with school improvement. In particular, the deputy headteacher is providing high-quality coaching to teachers. Following a focused lesson observation, teachers are provided with training and opportunities for professional development. They are set targets for improvement and then observed again to check that they have made progress.

This is steadily improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers also know that they must adhere to the agreed format for organising classroom displays to support pupils' learning. However, not all teachers are planning in enough detail for pupils of different abilities or expect their pupils to record their work to the standard expected by the school leaders.

There is now a consistent approach to evaluating the quality of education across different subjects. Subject leaders are gaining confidence in checking the quality curriculum implementation to ensure that it has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to assessing pupils' progress. Regular checks take place to confirm what pupils have learned. These are moderated externally for consistency and this has brought accuracy to the school's internal assessment systems. Outcomes of these assessments help teachers plan work which closely matches the needs of most of their pupils.

Improvements to the teaching of phonics have been successful. The temporary leader for phonics has refreshed her own training and is working closely with the you to support teachers in delivering high-quality sessions. Your focus on improving pupils' phonic knowledge has led to any differences in pupils' attainment closing.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders' actions have improved the teaching of early reading and phonics.
- The acting headteacher has the full support of a united team, who are all determined to ensure that, for the remainder of this year, pupils' learning is the central focus.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Inconsistencies remain in the quality of education and how well teachers meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, especially in reading in key stage 2.

External support

A range of support for the school has been sourced by leaders. This includes using leadership and subject experts to help the school improve leadership, the early years, English and mathematics. The support has been highly effective in helping the school improve.