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Mr G Wallace
Executive Principal
London Fields Primary School
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Dear Mr Wallace

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: raising aspirations and achievement: the power of partnership

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 1 and 2 February 2010 to look at the hard federation at London Fields and Woodberry Down Primary Schools. I note the federation has also worked in partnership with Mandeville Primary School since January 2009 and you are currently in the process of consulting on a three-school hard federation. Unfortunately, I was unable to visit this school due to the section 5 inspection taking place later in the week.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included discussions with senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the Hackney Learning Trust. I made brief joint visits to all classes in both schools and observed a federation staff meeting. I also looked at key documentation including information and communication technology (ICT) systems for your federation work.

Features of effective practice

- From the outset of the partnership, your inspirational leadership, coupled with your clear strategic vision for the federation, resulted in impressive improvement at London Fields within a short time. Your relentless drive to raise standards and steely resolve to ensure all staff assumed full responsibility for the achievement of every pupil in the federation ensured London Fields came out of special measures within a year. I note it was judged to be a good school in December 2008.

- Key to this success story was the outstanding leadership capacity you had developed at Woodberry Down over the years. This enabled you to immediately move talented leaders, including skilled teachers, to London Fields without this having a detrimental effect on the high quality of education existing at Woodberry Down. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that you appoint staff of calibre and, moreover, with future leadership potential.
- You invest quality time in professional development and hold staff accountable for improved outcomes for pupils. The drive and ambition for every pupil to succeed came through strongly in all discussions with staff. The excellent programme of joint professional development opportunities offered to staff, such as the effective in-house training I observed on teaching spelling, coupled with the immediate implementation of the outstanding Woodberry Down curriculum at London Fields, were significant factors in the school's improvement.
- Another influential factor was the speed with which you were able to transfer the exceptional ICT systems, established over the years at Woodberry Down, for curriculum planning, monitoring teaching and learning, tracking pupils' progress and day-to-day management. The websites for both schools are impressive support tools for staff. They create time for leaders to focus on coaching and modelling outstanding teaching, and staff to concentrate on improving teaching and learning.
- Curriculum plans are detailed and tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. The units of work on race and gender equality I scrutinised are impressive. I note the federation has received national recognition for its published work on the curriculum including the innovative assessment and marking procedures evidenced in pupils' books. I also note you are leading professional development locally and nationally to disseminate this work.
- Another impressive feature enabling the swift improvement at London Fields was how quickly you transformed the ethos of the school, including the learning environment. London Fields' pupils bubbled with enthusiasm and pride as they talked about 'the magical change that happened' at the start of the federation; it had given them a 'reason to learn'. They also appreciate access to the website that supports their learning at home and enables them to blog staff when in difficulty and receive replies outside of school hours. On pupils' 'still to do' list, is the chance to share the same performing arts opportunities offered to Woodberry pupils, including enrichment activities.
- Shared aspirations for high-quality and inclusive education in both schools were clearly evident. Teaching was lively and learning was purposeful. The presentation of pupils' work was of a high standard across the federation and the standard of pupils' work at London Fields showed remarkable improvement since its start. That said, we agreed work is still very much in progress for pupils to catch up on previous significant underachievement, particularly for the older ones.
- You receive excellent support from the chair of governors for your visionary, strategic development of the federation. The achievements of

the federation are clearly valued by the Learning Trust. Your plans to work together to ensure an expanded governing body retains its sharp focus on driving improvement are now appropriate.

Area for development

- Improve the range of performing arts opportunities, including enrichment activities, for pupils at London Fields Primary School.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop partnerships in support of school improvement.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector