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13 January 2012

Mrs Irene Cleaver
The Executive Headteacher
Elfrida Primary School
Elfrida Crescent
Bellingham
London
SE6 3EN

Dear Mrs Cleaver

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Elfrida Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2012, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the Chair of the Governing Body, local authority representatives, teachers and pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

Following the previous inspection, the school has become part of a soft federation with a nearby school. The headteacher of this school was appointed executive headteacher and a new head of school was appointed to lead and manage the school on a day-to-day basis. The leadership team, although now established, is relatively new.

As a result of the inspection on 25 and 26 November 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Overall, in 2011, national assessment and test results demonstrate that pupils' attainment remains low in Key Stages 1 and 2, although there is a clear trend of improvement in Key Stage 1. Progress has accelerated in some year groups since the previous inspection because there have been improvements to the consistency of teaching and learning overall. There are indications in pupils' workbooks that

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pupils are beginning to build systematically on what they already know and are able to do, and to make up for earlier underachievement. This is particularly the case in Year 6, where lesson observations, the pupils' work and the school's records show that attainment is rising. The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also effective. These pupils are mostly set tasks that are well matched to their needs. Good tracking systems are now in place which enable staff to monitor pupils' progress and identify those at risk of underachieving. However, strategic leaders recognise there is much more to do to bridge the gap between pupils' low attainment and that seen nationally.

The quality of teaching

The quality and consistency of teaching have improved under the insightful leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school. They are supporting teachers in identifying and addressing any underachievement. Strategic leaders have reorganised upper Key Stage 2 to enable greater challenge to be provided for the more-able learners, while providing high-quality support for those whose skills need boosting. In the lessons observed, the majority of teachers have clearly taken on board the new initiatives introduced by strategic leaders. In the better lessons, teachers set work that is well matched to the needs of pupils; they target questioning well and enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills through the effective use of talk partners. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm and some have a language-rich environment and high-quality work on display. They make effective use of plenary sessions to identify any learning gaps and build pupils' self-esteem. In the less effective lessons, teachers sometimes spend too much time talking, allowing insufficient time for pupils to explore issues for themselves and consolidate their understanding. Although teachers have higher expectations for their pupils, they are not always skilled in modelling the small steps in learning needed to enable pupils to access more difficult work. School leaders have worked hard to engage parents and carers in their children's learning. An increasing number are involved in activities such as supporting their children's early reading skills and there are well-developed plans to involve them in the setting and monitoring of pupils' targets.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. This is because teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. All staff know their pupils well and are increasingly focused on accelerating their progress while maintaining a nurturing approach. One pupil commented, 'The best thing about the school is that all the teachers really help you.'

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The new strategic leadership team has established a clear direction and set high expectations for the school community. This has accelerated the progress that the

school is making. The executive headteacher has used the support provided by the local authority to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to improve. The strategic leadership team has wisely used the resources of the collaboration to create a shared and challenging culture of accountability, which is beginning to result in a collaborative and cohesive school community. Strategic leaders have challenged inadequate practice and are working successfully to engage staff in professional development and to share best practice with each other and the partner school. The governing body is beginning to communicate higher ambitions for the school and setting challenging targets for achievement, although these have yet to be met. New systems to track pupils' progress are in place and meetings have been held with teachers to check their plans to deal with any slow progress. The quality of teaching and learning is being monitored, with the assistance of the local authority, and a further appointment to support teaching and learning has recently been made utilising the strengths within the partnership. What remains to be done is to embed more consistently the use of assessment and responsive, effective teaching which promotes high aspirations and independence in learning. The local authority, having recognised the pupils' underachievement in the last academic year, brokered the effective collaboration arrangements and has put in place additional support for the school. This includes consultant advice for subjects and reviews of key areas, including governance.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010

- Accelerate pupils' progress so it is consistently good across the school by:
 - building on the existing best practice to increase the amount of high quality teaching
 - ensuring that new approaches to teaching and learning are consistently applied in all classes
 - ensuring consistency in terms of a high level of challenge for all pupils in lessons, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Strengthen the school's engagement with parents and carers, in order to help them support their children's learning more effectively.