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Ben Roberts
Headteacher
Heathbrook Primary School
St Rule Street
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Dear Mr Roberts

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heathbrook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that plans clearly identify those responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken, and how this is reported to governors
- ensure that improvements in teaching are sustained through
 - further developing the work of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching
 - a structured induction and support programme for the large number of teachers new to the school in September 2014.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the Governing Body including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with an external consultant who is working with you to support the school's development. The school's action plan was evaluated. Accompanied by the deputy headteacher, I visited ten classes. Documents scrutinised included the school action plan, minutes of governing body meetings, reports from the external consultant, records of the monitoring of teaching and school information about pupils' progress. I also scrutinised the books of a group of pupils from Years 1, 4 and 5.

Context

Following the section 5 inspection you employed an additional teacher and an additional teaching assistant in order to support the school's improvement plans. A number of teachers are due to leave in July 2014; you have recruited seven new teachers, of whom six will be newly-qualified.

Main findings

Following the inspection you drew up plans to address the issues raised in the report. These plans identify actions to be undertaken, and the outcomes you expect as a result. Plans identify those responsible for carrying out actions, and include ways of checking this work. Some of the ways in which you intend to measure success are imprecise and therefore governors will be unable to judge whether an action has been successful. Also, plans do not show who is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of actions.

Teachers have a greater understanding of the information regarding pupils' progress and are using this to inform their planning. This ensures that lessons are focussed on the next steps in learning for groups of pupils. You are using a range of evidence to reach judgments on the quality of teaching which show that it is improving. You are confident that Year 6 results in 2014 will meet or exceed your predictions. You have secured increased stability in staffing, and from September 2014 all teachers will be on permanent contracts.

The school behaviour management system has been revised, and you have introduced a 'Be the best you can be' strategy across the school. To support improved behaviour further you have made alterations to arrangements for assemblies and break times. These changes have had a significant impact on behaviour in lessons with teachers reporting improved attitudes, and a reduction in poor behaviour after break times. Behavioural incidents have reduced by a half since the section 5 inspection. You continue to address issues around poor attendance of

some pupils, with the support of the local authority. Additional work will be necessary in order to improve attendance further.

Middle leadership has been strengthened and developed. The team has been extended, with greater clarification of roles and responsibilities. Middle leaders have benefitted from the support of the external consultant, and have grown in confidence. They are more involved in checking the quality of teaching, and work together when carrying out scrutiny of teachers' planning or pupils' work. They are now leading sections of staff meetings relevant to their role. You have set up action groups to ensure clear communication routes between senior and middle leaders and teaching staff. These groups are driving forward improvements in teaching and thus pupil progress.

It is disappointing that the external review of governance has not been completed. It is now underway, however, and governors are aware of the benefits of implementing any recommendations for the start of the new academic year. They consider that this timeframe is realistic.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Prior to and following the section 5 inspection you have met regularly with officers from the local authority to discuss the school's progress. You consider these meetings to offer both challenge and support as you develop and implement your plans for improvement. Just prior to the section 5 inspection, the external consultant carried out a review of the school's performance. You have worked closely with her since the inspection to address the issues raised in the report. She has worked with both senior and middle leaders to develop a strong, cohesive team with considerably greater capacity to improve outcomes for pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lambeth.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector