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Katrine Bulley
Acting Headteacher
Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education
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London
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Dear Ms Bulley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education

Following my visit to your school on 6 July 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. As a result of your unavoidable absence, I would like to thank the lead teacher and the substantive headteacher appointed from September 2017, for the help they gave me and for the time they 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 November 2016. 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- include measurable targets based on pupils' progress, including the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, in the school development plan
- speed up the most able pupils' progress in mathematics by pitching work at the right level of difficulty in lessons much sooner.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the lead teacher and the recently appointed substantive headteacher for September 2017, the vice chair of the governing body and representatives of the teaching staff to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and spoke to a group of pupils. Leaders shared with me a range of safeguarding documents and procedures. Leaders also provided me with information on how the performance of the school is monitored, including pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and the impact of governor's actions in response to the priorities identified in the external review of their work. An opportunity to walk the school with leaders enabled me to see pupils at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been changes to the leadership team. The headteacher resigned at the end of the autumn term and the deputy headteacher has stepped up as acting headteacher. Governors have appointed a substantive headteacher from September 2017, who has been working with the school one day a week. The local authority secured additional leadership support from a local headteacher who works with leaders on a temporary basis. Two new governors have been appointed.

Main findings

The initial response to the previous inspections' recommendations were new appointments including a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two deputy DSLs. The acting headteacher who is now the DSL undertook a safeguarding audit. As a consequence, safeguarding policies have been revised to incorporate all statutory requirements. Training for staff, including the designated and deputy safeguarding leads, has also been refreshed. Training is now kept under review to make sure everyone has good ongoing knowledge about the latest safeguarding requirements.

In my discussion with staff they confirmed a sharper focus on procedures as well as improved communication, through regular meetings and updates. Concerns about pupils, including potential safeguarding issues, are discussed as a priority at staff meetings as well as fortnightly safeguarding meetings. Lunchtime supervisors say that one of the deputy designated safeguarding leads checks on a weekly basis how vulnerable pupils are coping during their breaktimes. As a result, safeguarding pupils is a constant focus and staff are keenly aware of their collective responsibility to protect pupils from all forms of abuse. Staff say they feel more confident to seek advice from each other and from the designated safeguarding lead and deputies. They are quite adamant they would not hesitate to refer any concerns. Monitoring of all incidents, including those reported to the designated safeguarding lead and those which are referred on to the appropriate agencies, are rigorous. A scrutiny of

case studies confirms good record keeping and effective liaison work with outside agencies.

Leaders, including governors, have made sure that safeguarding pupils is given the highest priority. The acting headteacher provides a comprehensive overview of current safeguarding issues on a termly basis to governors. Policies have been revised and safeguarding procedures are more rigorous. During the inspection, staff and leaders were clear about their statutory responsibilities around safeguarding, and pupils say they are safe. One pupil told me, 'If you have a problem, teachers will sort things out because you can trust them, they are responsible.'

Governors are clear about their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe. They know that safeguarding the welfare of pupils is paramount. Governors have appointed new safeguarding governors who have undertaken appropriate training. The designated safeguarding governor is now supported by a deputy, who regularly monitors safeguarding procedures, including the safer recruitment checks recorded on the single central register. Governors have taken on board some of the action points raised in the external review and as a result are more sharply focused on the key priorities to move the school forward. The link governor for English has examined the quality of teaching and learning first hand for this subject and reported back to governors. My observations indicate that pupils' writing skills are strong and improving still further. This is a result of teachers identifying relevant and additional opportunities for pupils to practice and consolidate key writing skills in other subjects. Indeed pupils confirm they value the opportunity to draft and edit their work in different subjects with one explaining, 'it boosts your creativity'.

Leaders have invested time and effort into further training and support for teachers to raise the level of challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics. Pupil's jotting books and other work confirm that they are encouraged to reason more deeply about their learning. The 'quick grasp' policy implemented recently ensures that pupils have additional challenges to move their learning on at a brisk pace, after they have completed the initial task. However, from our joint observations we agree that the most able pupils are still not being challenged enough, because they complete work which they can already do. More able pupils told me that they sometimes find work too easy at the beginning of the lesson and they would relish the opportunity to work on harder activities much sooner. On a positive note, pupils explained that the school rules to develop their independence, by being brave (have a go), being still (time to think), and, if all else fails, asking a buddy, help them to work without being over-reliant on their teacher for help.

External support

Leaders have made good use of the advice and guidance provided by the local authority, and particularly as a result of changes to senior leadership roles. They have made sure that the acting headteacher is well supported by a headteacher mentor and through formal termly visits. Governors set up a school improvement

board which includes the local authority officer in order to keep a close watch on the school's work. However, the school improvement plan does not include measurable targets based on pupils' progress and in particular the progress the most able pupils make. This restricts governors from measuring the impact of leaders' work precisely.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Her Majesty's Inspector