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Graham Metcalfe
Headteacher
Eastbury Farm Primary School
Bishops Avenue
Northwood
Hertfordshire
HA6 3DG

Dear Mr Metcalfe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eastbury Farm Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 2015. 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:

- Develop the school's work to extend the range of evidence gathered to judge the quality of teaching over time, with a stronger emphasis on how well pupils are learning.
- Build on the good improvements already made to strengthen processes for recruiting and vetting staff by recording when systems are checked and by whom, and training more staff and governors in safer recruitment practice.
- Continue to extend the range of resources in the early years for children to play with and explore, to provide more variety in the activities provided.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We visited all classrooms together. The school improvement plan was evaluated as well as policies and paperwork concerning recruitment and teachers' performance. The single central record was checked as well as personnel files for newly-appointed teachers joining the school in September 2015.

Context

Since the previous inspection you have returned from extended leave of absence. Four teachers have resigned and are leaving at the end of this term and one is taking statutory maternity leave. The deputy headteacher is also moving on at the end of this term. The school has successfully recruited new teachers to replace them all from September 2015.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have acted quickly to improve systems and procedures for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. This has been a priority that has been addressed with considerable urgency. You keep up to date with the latest publications on safeguarding issued by the Department for Education and carefully assess the training needs of staff and governors in the light of new statutory guidance.

The school improvement plan is closely aligned to the key issues identified in the previous inspection, and pupils' achievement. The actions outlined in the plan are well chosen and sufficiently challenging to move the school forward in getting to good in the shortest possible timescale. You review the plan regularly and thoroughly and report your findings to governors. Even so, it will be important to specify your target dates set for reviewing the plan to ensure that there is no slippage along the way.

Key leaders have a strong desire and the necessary capacity to improve the areas for which they are accountable. For example, they have made a positive start in introducing the new National Curriculum and they are working with staff to develop robust systems for assessing the progress pupils are making. All senior leaders are now involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work including the quality of teaching. The forms they are using to record lesson observations are useful but focus too strongly on the teaching rather than how well pupils are learning. Leaders are developing a more reliable approach for judging the performance of individual teachers. This ensures that information used for appraisal and performance-related pay is not based on one source of evidence. The school is working towards a model

away from standard lesson observations, to a broader set of criteria including work scrutiny, interrogation of data, pupil and parent views. This is providing a secure evidence base to justify judgements.

Writing across a wide range of subjects is plentiful. The school's data show that pupils of all ages have continued to achieve well this year through good and better teaching. A new paired coaching model, where teachers observe each other and provide feedback, is working well in sharing the best practice widely through professional dialogue to improve the quality teaching. Spaces for learning are generally welcoming, well organised and tidy. Pupils in all classes behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Under new leadership, improvements have continued in the early years, with spaces for learning being used more effectively. Resources in the early years are adequate but limited. The school is aware that investment is required to address this successfully.

Governors have pressed on to make the necessary changes to move the school forward. They know the school well and carry out their duty to monitor the school's work effectively. They understand their core functions as governors and the need to form an independent view of the school's work. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory duty to make the required recruitment checks on new staff. It would be advantageous for more staff, including those responsible for administering the single central register, to be trained in safer recruitment. The governing body is advanced in preparing for new arrangements for performance-related pay from September 2015.

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

External support

The local authority has supported the school suitably providing guidance in improving systems for recruitment and advice on early years provision. The local authority will routinely undertake detailed reviews of the school's work at regular intervals.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board

cc. Local authority