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Ms Annie Blackmore
Head of Service
Barking and Dagenham Tuition Service
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Dear Ms Blackmore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barking and Dagenham Tuition Service

Following my visit to your school on 11 May 2017, with Diane Rochford, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school improvement plan includes regular checks on progress, which identify measurable targets based on pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders from all three sites, and members of the management committee, including the interim chair, to

discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and I scrutinised the external review of the management committee. You shared with me a range of documents to show how you are monitoring improvements to pupils' progress and attainment. There were opportunities for my colleague and me to observe the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, to look at work in books, and to meet with groups of pupils and staff across all three settings.

Context

Since the inspection in June 2016, there have been some significant changes in leadership and staffing. The head of centre of Seabrook resigned from his leadership role in the summer term. As a result, the centre manager of the tuition centre now has leadership overview of both centres, and is supported by a consultant ex-headteacher one day per week. A new deputy for the tuition centre took up their post from January 2017. The chair of the management committee resigned in the summer term. Her post is currently being filled by an interim chair appointed by the local authority. Four new members have joined the management committee. The remit of Seabrook has changed. Seabrook is now a short-term placement for key stage 3 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. There have been several changes in the teaching staff. Leaders are currently recruiting to fill two key teaching vacancies in English and science at the tuition centre.

Main findings

You and all leaders, including members of the management committee, have grasped the nettle, revising key policies, reviewing leadership responsibilities and implementing new procedures across the three sites to secure consistency of practice in all areas of the provision. You have wasted no time in implementing the priorities identified by the local authority review of the management committee. This, together with your improvement planning and regular monitoring activities, including leadership meetings, is beginning to have a major impact on provision and outcomes. As a result, all key areas are improving rapidly.

Leadership capacity has been boosted as a result of new appointments. There is clarity of responsibility for key areas across the three settings and greater cross-centre working at all levels. You and leaders have implemented an assessment procedure, in which pupils' progress is tracked. Staff baseline pupils on entry in order to set challenging personal and academic targets. There are termly checks on progress. This information is cross-referenced with work in pupils' books to secure confidence in the accuracy of assessments. Pupils' workbooks include their targets and rates of progress. As a result, pupils know exactly where they are in their learning. Staff use this assessment information well to pitch work at the right level of challenge. As a result, inspection observations and your own progress information confirm that progress rates are improving. However, there remain some inconsistencies across the three settings, particularly at the tuition centre in English

and science.

Regular monitoring to gather a range of evidence enables you and leaders to identify good or better practice, which is shared across the school. This information is also used to target support and training where it is needed, through team teaching and mentoring. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate the professional development and training, particularly when they meet on a regular basis with colleagues from other sites. They told inspectors that it gives them quality time to share with their colleagues what has worked well. As a result, good progress has been made in strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and practice. Simultaneously, this has strengthened teamwork across the provision. You have also made effective links with other schools and this has deepened staff's understanding of what constitutes effective practice. Teachers now show a better understanding of their roles in raising achievement.

Pupils' behaviour has improved immeasurably, including at the Seabrook centre. Once more, you have made sure that the behaviour policy and code of conduct are consistently applied at all three settings. As a result, behaviour logs show a significant decrease in the numbers of pupils who are removed from lessons and there are now very few physical restraints. Pupils' attendance is improving, reflecting their enjoyment of their time at the school. Staff told inspectors that they feel much better supported by leaders in managing some challenging behaviour(s) because they have had up-to-date training, and that the ethos is much calmer.

Pupils explained that they like this school because adults listen to them and deal with any concerns or worries they may have. They say that they now learn well because adults support them in lessons. Pupils told inspectors that they feel respected and that they are not judged unfairly. One pupil explained, 'You don't feel that if you fall you will drop.' Indeed, it is evident that staff have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. There is a purposeful learning environment in which pupils conduct themselves well. There is a tangible sense of trust, with strong relationships between staff and pupils.

Members of the management committee are now well organised and have clear lines of responsibility. They have a realistic view of the school's performance based on a range of evidence. This includes observations from their own visits, informative leadership reports which are more focused on the key priorities, and through the external monitoring of the local authority officer and external consultant. As a consequence, they are able to challenge you and other leaders more. Nonetheless, the school improvement plan does not have clear measurable targets based on pupil outcomes and/or the quality of teaching. This means that the management committee, you and leaders are not able to gauge the impact of your work accurately on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.

External support

You have made extensive use of the support available from the local authority. The local authority officer regularly checks the impact of your work, through monitoring activities and termly meetings. This provides checks and balances about your judgements, particularly for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have also brokered your own support from a consultant and therefore benefit from an external objective evaluation of the school's performance.

The local authority commissioned an external review of the management committee and appointed an interim chair. You and members of the management committee have found this support very helpful. The half-termly local authority monitoring board, comprising senior officers, keeps a close watch on the school's work. This includes the effectiveness of the management committee and the impact this has on the key recommendations outlined at the time of the last inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Her Majesty's Inspector