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Ms S Davies
Executive Principal
St John and St James Primary School
Isabella Road
Hackney
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Dear Ms Davies

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: leadership of more than one school

Thank you and your team for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 26 and 27 January to look at the leadership of the federation. Please pass on my thanks to the local authority representative, the parents and governors that also gave up their time and made a valuable contribution to the visit.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, staff, parents, local authority representatives and pupils; and the scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The effectiveness of the federation leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is outstanding.

Outcomes

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is at least in line with the national average with a strong trend of improvement over several years.
- Even though the environment beyond the school can be sometimes turbulent and challenging, pupils make outstanding progress across all stages from very low starting points.

- Different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a wide range of vulnerable groups, make exceptional progress because of the precise, relentless and well-managed early intervention and support they receive throughout their time in school.
- Pupils' skills and knowledge for their future lives are very well developed.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving.
- Pupils' attitudes are exceptional as is their enthusiasm for learning and school life. Pupils are excited and pleased to talk about what they have learned.

Provision

- Teaching is consistently good with a growing number of outstanding features. The application of the teaching and learning policy is adhered to unswervingly with rigour and relentlessness.
- The federation ensures that the consistency of the high quality of teaching and learning is supported by equally high-quality professional development and training which focuses on the important details and refinement of effective assessment strategies.
- The curriculum has been enriched by the federation's development of subject leaders and planning. The strong emphasis on a practical approach to learning, aligned with stimulating visits, motivates pupils' interest. The rigorous planning and teaching of literacy and numeracy skills by staff are outstanding.
- The care and welfare of pupils are a real strength of the federation. Excellent links with a wide variety of agencies are in place. Thoughtful, caring and responsive approaches to individual pupils and families make this aspect of the school's work outstanding.

Leadership and management

- Your vision, determination and extensive strategic skills and expertise are outstanding. You demonstrate great drive and ambition for the schools, applying a forensic precision to the procedures that maintain the federation's trajectory of improvement.
- Other leaders and managers across the federation, especially the heads of school, have a passion for being equally precise and detailed in their monitoring and evaluation of progress, attainment and the quality of teaching.
- Exemplary systems support leaders' rigorous analysis of practice and provide feedback to teachers on how to improve further. The information provides a general picture of the proportions of good and better teaching across the schools and the federation. However, providing this information about separate subjects is less developed.

- The governing body is an effective and strategic group which knows the federated schools well. It provides excellent and robust challenge and support in equal measure.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing an even more analytical overview of the quality of teaching and learning which identifies the proportions of good and better teaching in separate subjects, especially literacy and numeracy.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of the federation.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector