

# Children's Services Select Committee:

Visits to three Barking and Dagenham  
primary schools - March to April 2015



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## **Children's Services Select Committee - Lead Member's Foreword**

The Children's Services Select Committee is made up of local councillors and co-opted members who want to help improve outcomes for the Borough's children and young people by working with the Council and its partners to improve services. As a scrutiny committee, every year it decides which areas will form part of its Work Programme. At the beginning of the 2014/15 municipal year we noted that whilst our primary schools were improving, the number judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted was still relatively low. The Committee therefore agreed to consider the issue of *'how can more of the Borough's primary schools achieve outstanding performance?'*

The Committee agreed that the most effective way to achieve this was to familiarise itself with the latest framework used by Ofsted to inspect schools<sup>1</sup> and to undertake two visits to primary schools judged 'outstanding' at their last inspections and one visit to a school judged 'requires improvement' at its last inspection for comparison.

I speak on behalf of the Committee when I say that each visit was thoroughly enjoyable and proved to be a precious insight into the different aspects of a primary school. The notes from each visit are provided in this pack; we hope that primary school governors, particularly, note the common themes across the leadership of the three schools and use the set of questions we drafted for the visits as a tool to use in their own roles in supporting their school to improve. The Committee therefore recommended that one of the statutory co-optees of the Committee and I attend the Governors' Conference in September 2015 to talk about our observations and promote the use of the set of questions as a tool governors can use.

We also noted the comment that more could be done to celebrate the successes of the pupils attending our Boroughs' schools and felt that this fit in with the Council's priority - 'Encouraging Civic Pride'. We therefore made a recommendation to the Council's Communications Team to share positive stories of success from our Borough's schools (both primary and secondary) through, for example the Council's social network accounts, and hope that schools will also put these stories up on their notice boards for pupils to enjoy and receive inspiration from.

On behalf of the Committee, I thank Ian Starling, Head of School Improvement for his expertise and guidance, the Committee's Scrutiny Officer, Masuma Ahmed, who facilitated this piece of work and of course, the headteachers, staff and pupils of the three schools who gave up their precious time to discuss their journeys with us.

**Councillor John White**  
**Lead Member, Children's Services Select Committee 2014 – 2016**

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<sup>1</sup> School Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, January 2015

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## Recommendations arising from the visits:

The visits to three of the Borough's primary schools helped the Children's Services Select Committee (CSSC) to make the recommendations listed below.

The CSSC recommends that:

1. The Lead Member of the Committee, Councillor White, and a statutory co-optee of the Committee address governors at the Governor's Conference on 19 September 2015 to promote the approach they took during the CSSC school visits as a tool that would support governors in their role;
2. Councillor White and the statutory co-optee of the Committee feedback to the CSSC on governors' general response to the above recommendation.
3. The Corporate Director of Children's Services includes the set of questions drafted for the primary school visits, and the notes of the visits in her Director's report to governors and promotes the set of questions as a tool governors may use to support their roles;
4. The Corporate Director of Children's Services feedbacks to the CSSC on the governors' response to the above;
5. The Council's Communications Team seek to promote a minimum of at least one positive story of success in the Borough's schools per month via the most appropriate medium (the Council's website, social media pages etc);
6. The Corporate Director for Children's Services includes the selected positive stories in her regular Director's update report to schools with a request to schools to display the stories on their notice boards so that pupils may read about them. The stories should be provided in a format that is suitable for displaying on notice boards; and
7. The Cabinet Member for Education & Schools responds to the above recommendations.

# Children's Services Select Committee's Visit to Warren Junior School, Chadwell Heath

9 March 2015, 1.30pm – 3.00pm

Visitors: Councillors John White and Elizabeth Kangethe

Supporting: Masuma Ahmed, Ian Starling

Interviewees: Executive Headteacher (Gary Wilder), two teachers and four children

## Interview with Executive Headteacher, Gary Wilder

### The leadership and management

#### *How do you decide between priorities (plate spinning)?*

The School's leaders delegate responsibility appropriately but remain accountable for decisions. The trust in staff to carry out responsibilities is high because staff are respected for their expertise. Delegation of tasks gives staff an opportunity to develop professionally and also helps the leadership focus on its priorities.

Issues are prioritised according to the greatest impact on pupils' progress and achievement. It is important for all those involved in school improvement to recognise where a school is at, at a particular time; priorities for a 'requires improvement' school are different to that of an 'outstanding' school. The School would encourage the Local Authority to 'tailor' their support to schools having regard for the position an individual school is in. For example, there is a big drive within the Authority around improving citizenship lessons; however, for some schools this can become a distraction in their quest to move from 'requiring improvement' to good'.

Leaders are given **quality** time to reflect on priority areas.

The leadership hold the belief that outstanding teaching has the biggest impact on achievement. Senior staff do not see themselves as 'managers' but as leaders who want staff and, therefore, pupils to go on a journey. Senior staff oversee the induction of new staff.

Our ethos is to "facilitate teachers in their teaching". However, the school leadership feels the progress of every child is as much their responsibility as it is the teachers. Therefore, they have regular pupil progress meetings with the teachers.

### The quality of teaching

#### *How do you monitor pupils' progress?*

The School has a number of 'groups' e.g. pupils from BME backgrounds/ with SEND. The School's ethos is to ensure every child improves and makes progress. Many of the School's processes and procedures reflect this ethos rather than focussing on different groupings.

Teachers are aware that children's books provide good evidence of pupils' growth and development and use them regularly to check progress.

### ***How are teaching assistants supported to progress?***

All teaching assistants (TAs) are encouraged to specialise in an area of interest and when appropriate lead training on those areas on INSET day. (The School uses pupil premium partly for this.)

All teachers and TAs have a 'can-do' attitude to learning and a 'no put-downs' approach. This is considered a very important part of the School's ethos as it is recognised that attaching negative labels to children can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and stick with them for life.

### ***What is the school currently focusing on as an area for improvement?***

The School is putting in place the following 'RACK' structured approach to learning\*:

- Remember
- Apply
- Create
- Knowledge

*\*Information on this approach was in a document, which at the time of the visit was yet to be published.*

### ***Are children given the opportunity to comment on teachers' marking?***

Pupils are given independence and are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and environment. For example, they contribute to the marking of their work by giving feedback on the comments the teacher has written. The pupils induct new pupils to the School.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### ***How do you encourage good behaviour?***

A lead member of staff is in place to provide pastoral support and develop positive behavioural strategies with the pupils. This has many benefits such as quality time being given to the child to support them with their behaviour and work with parents. Having a proactive approach to behaviour means disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised.

Fining a family for a pupil's lateness or poor attendance is not normal. However, in cases where it is felt that the School has done all it can for the pupil and progress has not been made, it may be used.

## **Overall effectiveness**

### ***What links do you have with parents and the local community?***

The School is very responsible when it comes to supporting families and finding ways to help with wider issues. The School has an Inclusion Support Group (ISG) that seeks to meet the wider needs of the pupils such as needing a washing machine, help from food banks, re-housing etc. The School believes a good home environment is essential as it is

a “pre-condition for learning”. Teachers can make a referral for anything that concerns them about a pupil which the ISG will look into further. It tries to meet the needs of the pupils and families from its own resources before going to external agencies.

## **Interview with four pupils**

### **Overall effectiveness**

#### ***Why is this school outstanding?***

- This school is really fun but also hardworking. It is very important to have fun at school because that way you learn more.
- Our attitude towards each other is very good.
- We have the facilities we need.

#### ***How could your School be made better?***

- Food!
- We could be more involved in the lesson, like a pupil could take a lesson with the teacher.
- We could do more in Assembly and talk about things that are important to us.
- I think we could do more for charity; not just dress up days and Red Nose days. We could do summer fairs and we could do cake sales to raise money.
- We would like more opportunities to show our talents like singing, dancing, music and plays. Maybe we could have a talent contest and put on a show.

#### ***Do you have a school council and how does it work?***

- All- Yes. We have a better way of electing our members now. Before, it was about popularity but the teachers changed it. Now you have to do a statement about why you want to be on the School Council. The statements don't have names on them so you choose the statement you like the best, not the person.

### **Quality of teaching**

#### ***Do you like your teachers and if so, why?***

- We like our teachers because they are nice, they are more like our friends.
- They are never “hard” towards us.
- They listen to us very well.
- We can ask them questions anytime and they take their time to help us.

#### ***What is your favourite subject?***

Various answers (maths, English, Art, P.E, creative writing) but one pupil said “It's hard to choose which subject is the best – they are all really good”.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### ***What happens when you're naughty in class?***

- It's not good because the teacher's attention goes on them.
- We know it's not good because 'golden time' might get taken away.

## **Interview with two teachers**

### **The leadership and management**

#### ***In which way is the School supportive and flexible?***

Work-life balance!! There is no 'big-brother' culture here. A lot of trust is placed in our abilities and it is a very supportive environment. At the same time there are high expectations of us. I would not want to work anywhere else.

The leadership prioritises things very well and makes sure not everything comes at you at once.

We can be there for colleagues if needed, for example, we were able to go to the funeral of a bereaved colleague recently – the leadership is supportive at times like this.

The leadership takes time to understand new government policies before implementing them and how to work through them as a School. The Executive Headteacher does not jump every time there is a new Ofsted framework!

Short, medium and long term planning is done as much in advance as possible which takes the strain off staff when the time to deliver arrives. For example, we do our weekly plans and once they are completed they are shared with colleagues.

The leadership do not hold meetings 'for the sake of it'; every meeting has a purpose with the focus nearly always centred around something that will make a positive difference to the pupils.

### **Overall effectiveness**

#### ***What works well here?***

It's very positive and staff are encouraged to have specialities. Having a behaviour lead and someone responsible for pastoral care means we can get on with our job of teaching.

#### ***How do you engage with the children?***

We have morning meetings with the children at the beginning of the day when they will sit in a big circle. It gives them a chance to share good news, birthdays or what they did at the weekend, for example.

We have a "see-it, say-it" box where children can report anything that is worrying them and they know it will get dealt with.

Once a term we have a "what went well; even better if..." meeting where we support them to self-evaluate.



### ***How has the School established a strong partnership with parents?***

At home-time parents have the chance to catch up with us. If the matter is something that needs an in-depth discussion, they know they can make an appointment to talk to us anytime. Teaching assistants are out in the playground in the morning when parents are arriving and they are very approachable. Information about contacting us regularly goes out in the School's newsletter.

### **Quality of teaching**

#### ***Do you set or stream?***

We have setting but it is very fluid. Just because a child is in a lower set it does not mean they will be in it throughout school. Children receive the same curriculum but setting means we can target it in a way that means every child makes the right progress. There is no real stigma attached to a set and children appreciate the smaller group sizes. Without setting it would be difficult to push the more able children.

#### ***To what extent are children involved in lesson planning?***

Sometimes we have a 'preliminary' (this is usually with older pupils) where we will ask them what they want out of their lesson and check at the end if this is achieved.

With all children, we ask questions in their exercise books about their learning and will check to see if there is a response.

### **Other Information about the School**

- The School is a Teaching School (training teachers and providing training to other schools)
- The School is working with a number of other schools in the Local Authority.

### **Other Key Messages**

The Executive Headteacher believes that many of the answers to the questions being asked of schools today can be found within the schools in the Local Authority. He feels strongly that not enough is done to celebrate and recognise the strengths and successes that we have in the Borough.

# **Children's Services Select Committee's Visit to St Teresa Catholic School, Becontree**

Tuesday 24 March 2015, 1.15pm – 3.00pm

Visitors: Councillors S Bremner, E Fergus and D Smith and Co-optee, Ingrid Robinson

Supporting: Masuma Ahmed and Ian Starling

Interviewees: Headteacher (Michael Corcocan), Grace Hughes (Deputy Headteacher), two teachers and four pupils

*(Tour of School provided by Headteacher)*

## **Interview with Headteacher, Michael Corcocan (MC) and Deputy, Grace Hughes (GH)**

### **The leadership and management**

*MC*

#### ***How are you going to maintain an Ofsted judgement of outstanding?***

We have an impact driven approach to everything at the School.

MC circulated a document "The St Teresa School Story" explaining where the School was at in July 2011, its current position and, how it planned to maintain the progress made (see *Appendix A, 'The St Teresa School Story' and Appendix B, 'What does the school need to do to improve further?'*).

Keeping up with the pace of change and filtering what the School should be doing and not doing is a challenge. I try to act as a gatekeeper of information and stagger the changes that need to be made so that staff are not overwhelmed.

#### ***How do you maintain positive relationships with teachers and staff?***

I try to promote work-life balance by promoting flexibility; at this School it is OK for staff to have a 'shorter' day. I also try to minimise the bureaucratic tasks the School must do to give teachers more time to focus on teaching and progressing pupils. Our School Office Team is very valuable in this regard. Furthermore, we try to ensure there is an equal spread of work, so that for example, staff managing after school clubs are changed over regularly.

I teach Year 6 once a week which is a good way to keep grounded and keep in touch with the realities of what I ask staff to implement.

Governors of the School are very 'hands-on' and express a lot of appreciation for staff which is motivating.

***Where do you get your ideas from and how do you prevent things from going stale?***

*MC*

I think this is done by reading up to date material, working closely with other schools and institutions and regular networking.

***How important is staff training for your school?***

*MC*

We ensure that the training that staff attend leads to individual development as well as progress for the School by ensuring that the training is linked to either a school priority, leadership responsibility or their individual appraisal objective(s). *MC circulated a handout evidencing this (see Appendix C, 'CPD and Courses Overview 2012 - 2013- 2014).*

## **The Quality of Teaching**

***How do you monitor pupils' progress?***

*MC*

Staff have high expectations from all pupils in terms of both their work and behaviour.

As we are a small school; we know our pupils well. We monitor each pupil closely and all teachers are very aware of their contribution to the pupil's progress. We have pupil target meetings where we can monitor each child's progress very closely and our interventions are always evidence based.

We have very low mobility of both staff and pupils, which also helps.

*GH*

We change interventions if we see that they are not helping the pupil to progress.

***Do you set or stream?***

*GH*

The School does not have separate lessons for different ability groups but does have separate ability tables in lessons supported by teaching assistants. It would be difficult to have strict streaming as there is only one form per year group.

*MC*

As pupils approach their SATs, there is more streaming.

***Are there any unique aspects of education that you offer?***

*MC*

The School places a great emphasis on art and music as we believe this gives children a breadth of curriculum. We are planning a more coherent application to cultural learning. A small festival will be held in June. I do not believe that children should miss out on the arts

just because they live and attend school away from central London. The School has good links with a range of art partners including The Barbican and The Royal Opera House.

The arts have wide ranging positive impacts on children including enjoyment, receiving a broad curriculum, promoting self-confidence and creating good memories of school life.

## **Overall effectiveness**

### ***What links do you have with parents and the local community?***

MC

The School has also done some work with businesses; it took part in the business enterprise scheme and also worked with Barclays to raise pupils' awareness about money handling. A small amount of money is allocated to pupils every year so that they can use it to raise more money for a specific cause. Furthermore, the School had a careers' week for Year 6 pupils which involved parents coming in to talk about their careers.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### ***How does the School Council fit into planning and decision making?***

MC

The School does have a School Council, which is very hard working and has a budget. The school councillors love their roles; they are like 'little leaders' and do not see their role as being a 'boffin'.

## **Interview with four pupils**

### **Overall effectiveness**

#### ***Do you enjoy School?***

- All – yes!

#### ***What do you like best about your School?***

- Everyone helps each other if they get stuck in class. If you're working with a partner, they will explain the answer step by step.
- Our teachers are really good; they help us move forward

#### ***What makes this School outstanding?***

- We all care for each other. We are all very close as we know each other from nursery.
- Our teachers are very good and teach us what we need to know.
- Pupils leave higher than when they came in.
- We learn that we can do more than we thought.
- The teachers push us hard.
- Everyone values everyone in the school community.
- We are taught to be the best we can be.

### ***How do you feel about your School being outstanding?***

- When we got to outstanding it made me want to behave well outside school too to make sure my school keeps a good reputation.
- It makes me proud of my School.

### ***Are you looking forward to secondary school?***

- Yes, but I will miss this School a lot. We have been prepared for secondary school, for example, we know it will be bigger and that there will be more homework and you could get into big trouble if you don't do it.

### ***How could your School be made better?***

- Some older pupils helped the younger ones with the computer and internet by going on websites. We could do more of that.

## **Leadership and management**

### ***Do you feel you can talk to an adult at school if you have a problem?***

- Yes. In our school the teacher is there to help you, not to tell you off.
- Adults always listen to us and they take into account our opinions.
- They encourage you to get to the right answer yourself but help you if you get stuck.

## **Quality of teaching**

### ***What is your favourite subject and why?***

- Science.
- Maths because it is about problem solving and even when it's hard you persevere to get it right.
- English because you get to use your imagination.
- Art because it is relaxing.

### ***Why is your favourite teacher the best?***

- Ms Hughes is my favourite because she is really nice and kind. She doesn't shout at us. She's really good at explaining.
- Ms Hughes is my favourite. In her class we hardly get stuck because she goes through everything first. She explains everything in a clear way.
- Ms Hughes is my favourite. She sometimes gives us Year 6 work to push us.

## **The behaviour and management of pupils**

### ***What happens when you're naughty in class?***

- If it's serious you might have to stand in the corridor or even have to go to another class, like reception.
- You could miss your break.
- Also, you might have to do your homework at break time if you forget to bring it in.

## **Interview with two teachers**

*(The two teachers had taught for 7 and 10 years. One was currently teaching Year 2 and the other was teaching nursery as well as delivering the role of SENCO)*

### **Overall effectiveness**

#### ***Why is this School outstanding?***

- It's a small school and feels like a family. The School has a strong ethos in place and promotes the right values. Behaviour of pupils is outstanding partly because of the School's consistent messages about standards of behaviour and partly because of strong parenting at home.
- Expectations from the get-go are high, starting from nursery all the way to Year 6.

#### ***How has the School established a strong partnership with parents?***

- The School has a Code of Practice that describes how it will work with parents, which will soon be put up on the School's website. Information packs are sent to all pupils' parents.
- The School produces a regular newsletter which goes to parents.
- Staff are out there at home time to ensure parents have the opportunity to update us or catch up.
- For the early years' pupils we are in regular touch with parents including discussions in the morning.

#### ***Why is there low mobility of staff and children?***

Teachers are nurtured. It's not a challenge to develop yourself here and get further.

Because the School is outstanding often parents want their children to continue attending the School despite moving away from the area.

### **Leadership and management**

#### ***Do you find it easy to approach the Headteacher about different issues?***

- Completely, even if it's a 'slight' issue. He is very supportive. He is transparent and flexible in his approach and is always about.

#### ***In which way is the School supportive and flexible?***

- Handover of classes can be very detailed and continued help is offered even after you have been teaching the class for a while.
- There is flexibility around which year groups teachers are allocated, for example. It is understood that teachers may need a change or challenge to develop further and we are supported in this.

#### ***To SENCO Teacher: Do you feel you receive adequate support in delivering your role as the SENCO?***

- Yes. I am regularly on courses to ensure I am entirely up to date with the requirements of my role and the School and, I have flexibility to go on visits too.

(About 10 percent of the School's pupils have special educational needs or disability, which is in line with the average and two pupils have SEND statements).

## **Quality of teaching**

### ***What are your particular strengths as a teacher?***

- I think both pupils and colleagues find me approachable
- I have a good sense of humour
- I encourage my pupils constantly
- I have high expectations of them
- I have good behaviour management skills
- I am organised.

## **Other information about the School**

The School has worked closely with St Peter's Primary and St Vincent's Catholic Primary schools and took part in joint school reviews which it felt was very helpful for all parties.

## The St Teresa School Story

<p><b>Where we were (July 2011)</b> Achievement was Good</p> <p>Quality of teaching was Good</p> <p>Behaviour and safety of pupils was Good</p> <p>Leadership and Management was Good</p> <p>Overall Effectiveness was Good</p>	<p><b>And why</b> -Because – ‘Pupils’ achievement is good, given that they start in Year 1 with skills that are broadly average, and progress to the point where test results, as well as standards seen by inspectors in lessons and books, are above average.’</p> <p>-Because – ‘Teachers’ planning and classroom organisation are effective in enabling lessons to flow smoothly’. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good guidance and support for pupils. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language well on an individual and/or group basis and this helps these pupils in their understanding of particular aspects of their work. This additional teaching helps these pupils make good progress.’</p> <p>-Because Behaviour is good and attendance is consistently high. Pupils’ behaviour was good during the inspection, and “was often exemplary”.</p> <p>-Because The school identifies appropriately the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and incorporates the areas for development into plans of action. Monitoring and evaluating progress and attainment are systematic but on a few occasions are not always rigorous enough to correct the inconsistencies in teaching and learning in some classes.</p> <p>-Because The St Teresa Catholic Primary School is a good school. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is built on through the school, and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in line with their capabilities.</p>
<p><b>Where we are now... (September 2014)</b> Achievement is Outstanding</p> <p>Quality of teaching is Outstanding</p> <p>Behaviour and safety of pupils is Outstanding</p> <p>Leadership and Management is Outstanding</p> <p>Overall Effectiveness is Outstanding</p>	<p><b>And how we got here</b> -Because The progress levels of our children are rising rapidly and by the time they leave us at the end of Y6 they are high and now above average for all statistically significant groups with sig+ for many. As a consequence almost all groups of children attain at least in line with national averages with the majority being significantly above average. Other than progress in reading for the 2013 cohort. We also need to focus on better than expected progress for writing between KS1 and KS2.</p> <p>-Because In the time since our last inspection, much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects has never been less than consistently good and often outstanding (50%). As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, are making rapid and sustained progress as evidenced by national matrix data in 2014.</p> <p>-Because Pupils’ attitudes to learning are exemplary. Because of this they engage very well in lessons and make excellent progress as a result. Parents, staff and pupils are wholly positive about both behaviour and safety. Pupils increasingly work towards managing their own behaviour.</p> <p>- We are an outstanding school because the pursuit of excellence in all of the school’s activities is evident in all areas of the schools work and the impact is evident through excellent outcomes for our children. All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance and middle leaders, are highly ambitious and have the highest aspirations for our pupils, no matter what their background or group and lead by example. We assess areas for development and implement strategies where we can clearly measure the desired impact upon pupils’ attainment, progress or development.</p> <p>-Because The St Teresa Catholic Primary School is a good school. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is built on through the school, and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, currently make good or outstanding progress that are in line with or above national expectations.</p>
<p><b>Where we want to go next...</b> Achievement to remain consistently Outstanding</p> <p>Quality of teaching to remain Outstanding</p> <p>Behaviour and safety of pupils to remain outstanding</p> <p>Leadership and Management to remain Outstanding</p> <p>Overall Effectiveness to remain outstanding</p>	<p><b>And how we will get there</b> -By continuing consolidation of the levels of progress and attainment across the school focussing on progress in reading between KS1 and KS2 and further increasing the number of pupils that make better than expected progress (3 levels) between KS1 and KS2. Adaptation to the routine of test administration as 2-3 pupils in 2013 did not achieve potential on test day they were capable of.</p> <p>-By clear links developed between the system of lesson observations and monitoring, the professional development provided for staff based upon these and the appropriate links to their annual appraisal. Regular external validation of observations with joint school review and Link Advisor.</p> <p>-By strengthening of ‘Pupil Council’ impact each term to monitor the pupils attitudes and opinions carefully related to behaviour and safety around the school and on the playground. With the new Computing curriculum, ensure a clear and regular focus on e-safety is built in to enhance this even further.</p> <p>-By The school’s leadership ensuring the curriculum provides highly positive experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning, that shows independence and initiative of our learners, making this a particular area of improvement from our last inspection. The monitoring systems to encompass all areas of teaching and learning, with rigorous feedback that has impact across teaching, planning, environment and achievement.</p> <p>-By ensuring that more than 50% of teaching across the school is typically outstanding leading to all pupils making good and in many cases exceptional progress that often exceeds their expected attainment and progress based upon their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is supported by outstanding leadership and management across the school that focuses relentlessly on the progress and attainment of all groups of pupils.</p>



**What does the school need to do to improve further?**  
**July 2011 Key Inspection Issues and Actions**

**By April 2012, provide pupils with more opportunities to work independently, to solve problems and to carry out investigations, especially in mathematics and science.**

**Actions:**

1. Series on INSET sessions, provided by maths leader on investigative maths learning ***IMPACT:*** *A wider range of investigative work on a weekly basis linked to appropriate topics.*
2. New resources initially purchased to support Improving Primary Maths (LA maths scheme) ***IMPACT:*** *more varied investigation ideas for teachers.*
3. Regular class visits to local secondary school (and secondary teachers visiting St Teresa's) to work on both maths and science making use of their resources. ***IMPACT:*** *More varied investigative work and learning using improved resources, particularly in science.*
4. Focus on investigations in lesson observations, with good practice fed back at staff meetings ***IMPACT:*** *More consistent good practice and use of uniform formats for investigative work, led by the maths and science leader.*
5. New range of Science investigation sheets provided as part of a science inset on practical science. ***IMPACT:*** *A much better understanding of what topics and investigations could be planned for across all classes evident through good and outstanding observations.*
6. Work with LA advisory teacher to help develop the professional knowledge of the subject leader. ***IMPACT:*** *Good practice shared from other schools, including school visits to see exemplary practice which was fed back to staff to inform their planning/teaching.*
7. New IPC scheme for science based around a much more practical, investigation led approach to science from September 2013. ***IMPACT:*** *The cross curricular and more engaging approach to science through IPC units has made planning and accessing resources a much easier process which has had a very positive impact on the teaching and learning.*
8. New 'Busy Ants' maths scheme from September 2014 which has more regular, in-built opportunities for investigative work. ***IMPACT:*** *TBC*

**By April 2012, build on existing good practice to improve the quality of teaching and assessment by ensuring that all teachers consistently:**

- *identify what pupils of different abilities are to learn in lessons*
- *indicate in marking the next steps in learning and provide pupils with opportunities to correct their mistakes.*

**Actions:**

1. New 'Teaching and Learning' Policy devised by whole staff ***IMPACT:*** *led to a much clearer 'shared understanding' of the pedagogy that leads to good progress.*
2. Clarity on use of a clear objective and stepped Success Criteria ***IMPACT:*** *led to a more uniform approach to recognising different abilities needs within the lesson, and how they can move towards the objective.*
3. New 'Marking and Assessment' policy devised based upon INSET by the D.H. ***IMPACT:*** *The policy set out clearly the expectation in each Key Stage for marking and Feedback.*
4. Book Monitoring sessions with SLT and other key subject leaders ***IMPACT:*** *to detailed feedback to staff on areas for individual/whole school improvements to help ensure good progress as a result of marking and feedback.*
5. As part of the school approach 'Read and Respond' reflection time takes place across classes at an age appropriate level to allow time to react to marking. ***IMPACT:*** *In line with our 'Marking and Assessment' policy, there is more visible evidence of pupils using feedback to inform and improve subsequent learning.*
6. 'Feed Forward' approach in KS2 allows pupils when appropriate to feed targets set forward to following pieces of learning to try and achieve them. ***IMPACT:*** *In line with our 'Marking and Assessment' policy, there is more visible evidence of pupils using feedback to inform and improve subsequent learning.*

- **Twelve additional key improvements since last inspection.**

**Actions:**

1. Introduction of a range of key interventions and strategies which have a clearly measurable impact to support pupils who are at risk of being below national expectations. Reading Recovery, project X, Language Link (Reception and Year 3) and Talk Boost. ***IMPACT:*** *The wider use of structured interventions that have a clear assessment on entry and exit have helped to ensure measurable impact on progress.*
2. Introduction of two key processes to support all pupils making expected or better than expected progress:  
*Pupil Progress Meetings*  
*Target Pupil Meetings*  
***IMPACT:*** *more detailed knowledge and understanding of the groups and individuals in need of support to make good or better progress. Clearly documented record of the progress with relevant targets and levels for these key pupils.*
3. Implementation of International Primary Curriculum ***IMPACT:*** *a much more engaging and relevant curriculum that regularly involves parents and carers in the learning.*
4. Introduction of a range of internal monitoring and CPD strategies such as 'Team Teaching' and 'Lesson Study' ***IMPACT:*** *school is making more effective and planned use of internal strengths identified through monitoring and observation to support the development of all teachers.*
5. Introduction of external validation of monitoring process and judgements, with Joint School Review undertaken annually. ***IMPACT:*** *with the support of local Heads and Deputies as well as the LA Link Advisor carrying out teaching and learning observations across the school, validation of areas of strength and areas for development support school improvement.*
6. Support for development of other schools (in and out of borough) through shadow moderation (EYFS) and curriculum development support as well as supporting monitoring of teaching and learning in neighbouring schools and support for out of borough school in implementing their IPC. ***IMPACT:*** *Process of school to school support has helped St Teresa's play a key role in the development of the curriculum, teaching and learning in other schools.*
7. Achievement of International School Award with a link to Ghana primary school. ***IMPACT:*** *The development of the pupils' strong SMSC education is further developed by these international links.*
8. Achievement of Arts Mark ***IMPACT:*** *recognition of our wide ranging art, music, drama and design work across the school that reflects a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that the children experience.*
9. Development of parental engagement in learning with termly curriculum parent letters and parent information meetings (Supporting Reading, Supporting Phonics) ***IMPACT:*** *The strengthening of parental support at home for their children's learning, including those families who find working with the school difficult, has led to more effective home support.*
10. Development of termly Governor visits to school and Governor Information Pack ***IMPACT:*** *Help for support by the Governing Body in their role as a critical friend. Governors better informed and able to access a range of information and data about the school's performance.*
11. Whole Staff development of key policies such as a whole school 'Teaching and Learning' policy and 'Assessment, Marking and Feedback' policy. ***IMPACT:*** *Whole staff have ownership of the schools approach to pedagogy and our school assessment policy which sets out a clear and effective approach for all staff leading to more consistent and effective approaches.*
12. Phased implementation of updated Maths scheme of work to support accelerated and continuous progress in maths across KS2. ***IMPACT:*** *TBC*

## CPD and Courses Overview 2012-2013-2014

**Highlighted yellow = CPD related to improvement of Teaching and Learning**

<b>Date / title of Course</b>	<b>Whole school priority link?</b>	<b>Leadership responsibility link?</b>	<b>Appraisal Objective link?</b>	<b>Feedback/Impact</b> (eg: on pupil progress/ staff knowledge and skills / SLT role / meeting an appraisal objective)
Autumn 2012 Range of NQT courses with focus on IPM Maths / RE Display / Outstanding RE teaching			(NQT course)	Staff meeting feedback on some aspects relevant to whole staff
October 2012 Phonics progression in Year 2	Y			Staff meeting Will link with the whole school priority of reading development for this year to help inform more consistent teaching of phonics and better outcomes in reading
October 2012 Leading the Learning in Geography		Y		SLT feedback and will advise new curriculum review for 2013.
October 2012 Progression in punctuation and Grammar in KS2	Y			Staff meeting Will link with the whole school priority of reading development for this year and help support learning of SPAG for pupils in KS2
October 2012 Speech and Language		Y		To support ongoing development of SENCo role
November 2012 Maths in Early Years		Y		Staff meeting feedback on some aspects relevant to whole staff which will support pupils approach to maths investigative work.
January 2013 Good to Outstanding teaching	Y			Whole staff INSET day. Informed the development of our teaching and monitoring procedures.

January 2013 Oracle Update training					Refresher on the features in Oracle for office.
January 2013 Empowered Voice conference			Y		
January 2013 Arts Mark Training			Y		To inform the development of Arts within the school leading to a successful artsmark application
January 2013 TVI visit for planning and teaching focus	Y				Formed part of our Teaching and Learning Policy review for 2012-2013 which will directly impact the standards and approach in classroom teaching
January 2013 SEN in Raiseonline			Y		To ensure we make effective use of data for SEN pupils
February 2013 Raising Boys Achievement (Gary Wilson)	Y				Follow up INSET for all staff by Gary Wilson arranged (April 2014) to explore ways to develop boys' achievement.
February 2013 SRE in Schools			Y		Diocesan guidance on the use of the 'Journey in Love' scheme to teach Sex and Relationship Education. Will be looking at developments for Summer 2014 teaching of this area.
February 2013 EYFS moderation			Y		EYFS leader working as a shadow moderator in primary school
March 2013 EAL Forum	Y		Y		New cross-borough forum to share good practice and develop support for our growing number of EAL pupils
April 2013 KS1 gymnastics			Y		Shared at the KS1 team meeting to support more effective teaching and learning in gym lessons

May 2013 IPC curriculum course	Y	Y		Informed the development of our whole school curriculum
June 2013 Safeguarding and Child Protection refresher		Y		3 yearly update for all staff on child protection issues and procedures
July 2013 TA Punctuation and Grammar course	Y			Course run in school as a refresher on punctuation and grammar skills in light of the new KS2 assessments from May 2013.
Nov 2013 Diocesan leadership course		Y	Y	Impact on the effectiveness of the SLT and the team led by Mrs Healy
Nov 2013 CCRS		Y	Y	Strengthening the teaching and potential leadership of RE.
Nov 2013 Talk Boost Training session	Y			Strengthening the teaching of literacy (specifically speech and phonics) for children in KS1
Nov 2013 CCRS		Y	Y	Strengthening the teaching and potential leadership of RE.
Dec 2013 Reading Leadership & Outdoor classrooms (School visit to Beam Primary)	Y	Y	Y	Approaches to reading teaching to enhance progress between KS1 and 2 fed back to staff and incorporated in to SDP.
January 2014 Reading Recovery Training	Y			Training for Year 1 teacher who will help support the 'exit assessment' process for pupils to help assess impact and progress of RR.
January 2014 Leadership Course		Y	Y	
January 2014 CCRS		Y	Y	Strengthening the teaching and potential leadership of RE.

February 2014 SLT Day (Self Evaluation Review)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Strengthening the teaching and potential leadership of RE.
February 2014 CCRS		Y		Y	Feedback to whole staff – training session linked to PE development (Sports Premium)
February 2014 PE course held at St Teresa		Y			Working towards the Healthy School Bronze Award and better health outcomes for pupils
February 2014 Bike It champion training	Y			Y	
February 2014 Leadership course		Y		Y	
February-April 2014 Reciprocal Reading (4 sessions)	Y	Y	Y	Y	The impact for pupils across KS1 and KS2 will be evident through an even more thorough approach to daily guided reading which has a clearer focus on AF2 and AF3 reading skills.
February 2014 Early Years development course		Y	Y	Y	
March 2014 Maths Course – new curriculum	Y	Y	Y	Y	Informed the development of a new scheme for September 2014.
March 2014 CCRS		Y	Y	Y	Strengthening the teaching and potential leadership of RE.
March 2014 Speech and Language Handbook Training		Y	Y		SENCo now fully trained to support staff in the use of the S&L development handbook which has a direct impact on supporting SEN children with Speech and Communication needs.
March 2014 NRich maths scheme training	Y	Y	Y		Will be delivered as INSET to whole staff as part of the support materials for the new maths curriculum to be introduced in September 2014

March 2014 Tenery Training (PE)		Y			Refresher training for staff on Tenery to help provide a better variety of PE activities for pupils
March 2014 Seed to Plate Launch		Y	Y	Y	Initiative that will support the development of an 'outdoor classroom' for 2014-2015 and enhance or science curriculum for the pupils with more practical growing and cooking skills.
April 2014 IPC Development Day	Y	Y	Y	Y	New curriculum units and themes covered to be fed back to staff in June in preparation for September curriculum.
June 2014 English Curriculum Development Day	Y	Y	Y	Y	Will be delivered as INSET to whole staff as part of the support materials for the new English curriculum to be introduced in September 2014
June 2014 Leadership course		Y	Y	Y	To support development of leadership, with a particular focus on catholic School leadership.
June 2014 EYFS writing development	Y	Y			Link to 2014-15 SDP priorities as we focus on development of higher level writing skills across the school
June 2014 Maths teaching school visit – observation	Y			Y	Class/appraisal development link to support the teaching of higher level maths skills in KS1.
July 2014 Developing the New Geography Curriculum	Y	Y	Y	Y	Will feed in to subject leadership plan for curriculum implementation. To be fed back to staff on September INSET day.



September 2014 Reciprocal Reading	Y	Y	Y	
October 2014 D&T cooking course		Y	Y	
October 2014 PE Leadership course		Y	Y	
November 2014 New to Year 6			Y	
November 2014 PSHE and Safeguarding		Y	Y	
Jan 2015 Y6 writing moderation meeting	Y		Y	
Jan 2015 FFT Aspire Training		Y		
Feb 2015 L3 Safeguarding refresher		Y		
Feb 2015 EAL forum	Y	Y	Y	
March 2015 Developing writing in KS1	Y		Y	
March 2015 New to Year 2 - moderation			Y	

# **Children's Services Select Committee's Visit to Southwood Primary School, Dagenham**

30 April 2015, 1.45pm – 3.15pm

Visitors: Councillor John White, Councillor Irma Freeborn, Co-optees Ingrid Robinson and Elizabeth Dahunsi

Supporting: Masuma Ahmed, Ian Starling (officers)

Interviewees: Headteacher, Scott Halliwell, two teachers and four pupils

*(Tour of School provided by Headteacher)*

## **Interview with Head Teacher, Scott Halliwell (SH)**

### **The leadership and management**

***What do you think led to the School receiving an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' in 2013 and what are you doing to address this?***

There was too much management and not enough leadership in the School. We now have Assistant Heads and we are developing middle leaders. This enables a good system to be place to ensure weaknesses are identified and addressed quickly. There are clear lines of accountability now.

I think creativity and innovation comes from having trust in your staff to deliver their best but the system in place before did not achieve this.

Recently the School has made a big effort to engage with parents.

***Do you agree with the last Ofsted report?***

Yes, I do agree with it for the reasons discussed. The Lead Inspector did say that the School could become outstanding relatively quickly which we aspire to achieve. It would be nice to have a bit more time to embed our planned changes before the next Ofsted inspection.

***How do you decide between priorities (plate spinning)?***

I believe in delegation and trusting people to fulfil their roles. It is getting easier to do this but it is a fast changing School so it will take some time.

***How useful is your Governing Body?***

It has been through a journey itself. Now all members want to be involved in influencing the direction of the School. The governors are very supportive and keen for the School to move forward. Now it is time to move further forward with the Governing Body and get the balance between support and challenge right.

***Have you met the National Leader of Education, Gary Wilder?***

I have but I have not worked with him directly. I am open to meeting anyone who will help me improve the School. I do feel very well supported within the local head teacher networks.

***Is there high or low mobility of staff and what are the reasons?***

When I first arrived there was little movement of staff but that has changed now as a result of people reaching retirement and others needing a change after having worked for the School for many years. This has caused a rapid pace of change and has meant that there are quite a few new staff in post now. Generally we do not use agency teachers.

***Who inducts new staff?***

The Deputy Head mostly but we also have whole staff training and INSET day where others contribute to induction. The Year Group Leader will also support and contribute to the training of new staff. We are going to look at involving pupils in staff induction in the near future.

***Do you have an open door policy for all staff?***

Yes, but there's also now the structure in place to ensure that matters that I do not need to get involved with are dealt with appropriately by middle leaders, for example.

***How has the School established a strong partnership with parents?***

We have invited parents into the School much more. We have more events that involve parents, for example, we had a reading day when parents came into read with their children which the children and parents felt very positive about. We ensure that there are more staff around on parents' evenings and at the beginning and end of the school day.

***Have you thought about using the school premises to offer classes to parents, which may in turn help them to support their children?***

We have but at the moment space would be an issue. We would definitely look into this if we could overcome that.

***Do you teach?***

Not at the moment because of the time I must dedicate to making changes needed in the School. However, once things are settled I would love to teach on a regular, weekly basis.

***What links do you have with parents and the local community?***

We still have work to do on raising aspirations. We would like to get parents to come into to talk about their careers and we would like to draw inspiration from the local community to raise aspirations. Pupils from the School Council have visited the Houses of Parliament. We would like to do more on local history as part of learning but as part of raising aspirations too.

## **Quality of teaching**

### ***Do you set or stream?***

We do stream Year 6 pupils. Year 5 pupils are streamed for maths only. The reason we do not stream across all year groups is because the gap between pupils is not as wide or complex to address when they are younger. The senior leadership team has been doubled, there are now more Assistant Heads and 24 teaching assistants so we are now thinking about also streaming Year 4 pupils, as we have the support and capacity. Strategies for improving teaching and learning have been reviewed. Now there is targeted support; most teaching assistants are working on learning interventions for targeted support.

## **Interview with four pupils**

*Two Year 6 girls, one Year 5 boy and one Year 4 boy*

## **Quality of teaching**

### ***What is your favourite subject?***

- Maths
- Art
- English
- Maths & ICT

### ***Do you like your teachers and if so, why?***

- I like our teachers. They help us if we get stuck. Once I couldn't understand mode, mean and median but after my teacher showed me a video, I got it.
- I like our teachers. They help us and don't make us feel bad when we get stuck.
- Teaching could be improved more by listening to us more.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### ***What happens when you're naughty in class?***

- If it's quite bad they might have to sit on the time-out table. The time-out table is in the same room but away from the other tables.

### ***Have you ever experienced bullying?***

- Yes but when it went to Mr Halliwell, it stopped.
- I did have a problem as certain pupils wouldn't leave me alone. The teacher spotted it. Mr Halliwell got involved and it stopped.
- We have playground leaders, which helps stop bullying.
- I used to sometimes find it difficult and feel different because of my stammer. Now I am more confident and I was voted school councillor by my class.

## **Overall effectiveness**

***Please put your hands up if you like this School.***

All raised their hands enthusiastically.

***Why do you like this School?***

- Since Mr Halliwell came to work here there is a better reward system for behaviour.
- There are more art lessons now which I enjoy.
- Since Mr Halliwell came here children's behaviour is much better; no one is nasty.
- There's been an improvement in the curriculum. There's more for smarter kids and more support for pupils who need extra help.
- We get booster groups.
- On Friday we get to go out of class to work on Year 6 maths and English. I like the challenge.

***Are you looking forward to going to secondary school?***

Both Year 6 pupils: Yes.

I will be going to Sydney Russell. I have been to see it. It was good; it has a new building and lots of computers. It was so big and made me feel quite small.

***Are there any clubs or extra-curricular activities you go to during the lunch break or after school?***

All- Yes, there is:

- Homework club
- Gardening club
- Football- for boys and girls!
- Netball
- And lots more too.

***Do you have a school council and how does it work?***

- Yes; we are all in it!
- Our classes choose who goes on the School Council. You have to put your name forward, make a speech and do an application. There are two school councillors in each class.

***What could you do to improve it?***

- May be we could have more boys on it.

***How could your School be made better?***

- It should have more fun lessons.
- Sometimes in English we have long writing sessions so it would help if it the teacher could break it up more.
- Misbehaving children should have a specific member of staff to deal with them
- Better school dinners!

- The pack lunch table in the lunch hall is getting shorter and shorter. The School should introduce a queuing system so people have to take turns for lunch.

## **Interview with two teachers**

*One teacher with many years experience of teaching at Southwood (ST) and one teacher new to the School, also recently appointed as an Assistant Head (CS)*

### **Leadership and management**

#### ***What changes have you noticed since there has been a change in leadership?***

ST: There was a lack of consistency across the board. There was also a lack of awareness; you had to find certain policies yourself and not everyone knew where they were kept. Staff now not only know where the policies are but are consulted on them. We are now more encouraged to go on lots of courses for our own development. The changes made have been really needed. There has been a lot of change including new staff which some people may have found hard but ultimately it has been great for the School.

#### ***What works well here?***

CS: The Headteacher and deputy headteachers work extremely well together in terms of their skill set. It's great to see Mr Halliwell spend so much time with the children. He knows them and the staff very well. He provides the right level of support and challenge.

ST: With a bigger leadership team and more teaching assistants, everyone feels better much more supported.

#### ***What one thing in your opinion has made the biggest difference to the School?***

ST: I think the change in the structure of the leadership has made the most difference. This has led to better communication and support.

CS: For me it's Mr Halliwell's vision for the School. He is very open and wants to hear from us what the challenges are in improving the School.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

#### ***Have the changes made been reflected in the pupils?***

ST: Yes, behaviour now is excellent.

We have an e-safety policy which both staff and children are well aware of. All children sign a statement which says that they have read and understood the policy.

#### ***How do you encourage good behaviour?***

ST: Behaviour management is now much more consistent. We reward good behaviour. For example, we held a prize ceremony. We also give out labels for good behaviour and we praise the pupils in a way that is acknowledged by the whole class so other pupils can learn from that pupil.

## **Overall effectiveness**

### ***What are your first impressions of the School?***

CS: Excellent. The School has a great vision that involves a sense of community. It does not feel like forced change but change so we can be the best we can be.

### ***Why do you want to be the best?***

CS: Because that is what our children deserve. They only have once chance at primary education and it must be the best.

### ***How does the School differ from the school you worked in previously?***

CS: My last School was also a 'requires improvement' school. The biggest difference is in the way things are done. There was a blame culture at the last school. A lot of things felt like a tick box exercise and it did not feel like everyone was in it together. The other thing is that no one was ever in the staff room! In this School staff enjoy the staff room; we often have a chat about how our classes have gone, which is a very positive and pleasant thing.

### ***What was the reaction here when you got 'requires improvement'?***

ST: Staff were sad and shocked. However, individuals were not blamed and it was felt it would take a team effort to make changes for the better.

### ***How has the school established a strong partnership with parents?***

ST:

- A newsletter goes out every week
- We had a workshop type meeting with parents where we showed them the School's ICT and other facilities. Our parents are now more aware of the curriculum; every half term we update them on changes.
- We have developed our website in a way that will help parents support their children.
- We have a lot more events that involve parents
- The feedback we've received directly from parents tells us that they are more positive about the School.

CS: We are also thinking of getting a school Twitter and Facebook account which the children would lead to show their parents and the community what they're achieving at school.

### ***How many ideas about change come from the children?***

CS: We have a very strong School Council. One of the ideas it has talked about which we as staff are considering is the introduction of iPads to aid their learning.

## **Quality of teaching**

### ***Is your method of teaching multiplications simple (as some schools seem to use complicated methods)?***

ST: Yes, it is simple as we find that to be more effective.

CS: We use games, songs and something called 'round the world timetables' to make it as enjoyable and effective as possible.

***Do you give children the opportunity to comment on your marking?***

ST: Our new marking policy addresses previous gaps in this area. We have improvement and reflection time in lessons now which gives the children time to reflect on our feedback and marking. Evidence says that feedback is essential in learning so we now put more time and investment into this.

***What are you doing to improve attainment levels in writing?***

ST: As well as targeted support for pupils, we use a more diverse range of texts which includes poetry, play scripts and books that offer much richer language.

***How are teaching assistants supported to progress?***

ST: We have introduced performance management for teaching assistants. They are also undergoing maths and literacy training.

CS: We also have something called Project X Code which is a staff driven project that aims for teaching assistants to have a much wider impact.



## Questions drawn up by members of the Children's Services Select Committee

The Committee formulated these questions for visits to three primary schools in the Borough between March and April 2015.

### Questions for the Headteacher

1. How do you decide between priorities (plate spinning)?
2. How much of your time is spent being pro-active/re-active?
3. What is the ethos of your school?
4. Do you agree with the last Ofsted report?
5. What do you think led to the school receiving an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' in [month, year] and what are you doing to address this?
6. What have been (*or* do what you think are) the most the important developments in making this school [good/ outstanding]?
7. What do you think has been (*or* is) the most difficult aspect of getting this school to [good/ outstanding]?
8. How are you going to maintain (*or* get to) an Ofsted judgement of [good/ outstanding]?
9. What is the main current area of development that the school is working on?
10. Where do you get your ideas from and how do you prevent things from going stale?
11. How useful is your governing body?
12. Who inducts new teachers and pupils?
13. What are your pre-conditions for learning?
14. Do you set or stream?
15. Do you teach?
16. Are there any unique aspects of education that you offer?
17. How do you monitor pupils' progress?
18. How does the school council fit into planning and decision making?
19. How do you maintain positive relationships with teachers and staff?
20. How important is staff training for your school?
21. What training courses do you recommend for teachers/teaching assistants?
22. How do you facilitate teachers in their teaching?
23. What help have you had from the Council's school improvement team in the past and what has been most helpful?
24. What links do you have with parents and the local community?
25. Have you thought about using the school premises to offer classes to parents, which may in turn help them to support their children?

### Questions for Teachers

1. Why is (*or* isn't) this school outstanding [yet]?
2. What was the reaction here when you got [requires improvement/ good/ outstanding]?
3. Do you find it easy to approach the Headteacher or senior staff about different issues? Do you feel listened to?
4. What changes have you noticed since there has been a change in leadership?
5. Have the changes made been reflected in the pupils?
6. What one thing in your opinion has made the biggest difference to the school?

7. What works well here?
8. In which way is the school supportive and flexible?
9. What is the school currently focusing on as an area for improvement?
10. Is there high or low mobility of staff and if so, why?
11. To what extent are children involved in lesson planning?
12. How many ideas about change come from the children?
13. Do you give children the opportunity to comment on your marking?
14. How are children's strengths identified and encouraged?
15. How do you encourage good behaviour?
16. How do you engage with the children?
17. Which years do you most enjoy teaching and why?
18. What help do you have with managing difficult behaviours?
19. What are your particular strengths as a teacher?
20. What training has had the most impact on your teaching in the last year?
21. Do you feel the activities and lessons encourage independent thinking? What works best?
22. What are you doing to improve attainment levels in [writing/ maths/ reading]?
23. How has the school established a strong partnership with parents?
24. Why do you want to be the best?

### ***For new teachers new to the school***

25. What are your first impressions of the school?
26. How does the school differ from the school you worked in previously?

### ***For SENCO teachers:***

27. Do you feel you receive adequate support in delivering your role as the SENCO?

### **Questions for teaching assistants**

1. Do you enjoy your role as a TA?
2. Do you feel valued and listened to by senior staff?
3. Do you feel there is anything you would like to raise on behalf of the children?
4. How are varying needs managed within a class?
5. Do you feel teachers and TAs have enough flexibility to deliver lessons in a way that best benefits children?
6. How would you improve learning outcomes for children?
7. How are teaching assistants supported to progress?

### **Questions for Pupils**

1. Do you enjoy school?
2. What do you like best about your school?
3. Why is (or isn't) this school [good/ outstanding]?
4. What makes this school outstanding?
5. How do you feel about your school being [outstanding/good/requires improvement]?
6. Do you like your teachers and if so, why?

7. Why is your favourite teacher the best?
8. How does your teacher help you to learn?
9. How does your teacher enable you to improve your work?
10. What helps you learn?
11. What makes a lesson fun?
12. Which type of lessons do you find most interesting and why?
13. What is your favourite subject and why?
14. Do you feel you can talk to an adult at school if you have a problem?
15. Do you feel the adults in the school listen to you?
16. Do you have a school council and how does it work?
17. Are the children well behaved at this school?
18. What happens when you're naughty in class?
19. Have you ever experienced bullying?
20. Do you feel safe at school?
21. Are there any clubs or extra-curricular activities you go to during the lunch break or after school?
22. How could your school be made better?
23. Are you looking forward to secondary school?



## Comments from the Cabinet Member for Schools and Education

I am pleased that the Children's Services Select Committee has investigated how more of the Borough's primary schools can achieve outstanding performance, and I support the recommendations of the Select Committee.

1. The quality of school governance is a significant factor in the performance of a school. As part of the governors' training programme, there is an annual conference for Governors on 19 September 2015 with national and local speakers and practical workshops, all focussed on improving the governance of schools. It would be extremely beneficial if the Lead Member of the Select Committee, Cllr John White, and a statutory co-optee of the Committee led one of the workshops to promote the approach taken during the school visits as a tool to support governors in their role.
2. Hopefully, there will be a dialogue about best practice during the workshop led by Councillor John White at the Governors' Annual Conference so that mutual learning can be fed back to the Select Committee.
3. I support the recommendation that the Corporate Director of Children's Services includes a set of questions in her Director's report to governing bodies as a tool they may use. The list may be based on those used during the Select Committee visits to the three primary schools. However, I suggest that the list prioritises the most important questions for governors to ask at their meetings to hold the Headteacher to account, and help drive up quality and achieve an outstanding assessment.
4. It would be sensible for the Corporate Director to evaluate the impact of the tool-kit of questions on the business of the governing body and to give this information, and the views of governors on the tool-kit of questions, in due course to the Select Committee.
5. I support the promotion of good news stories about schools on a regular basis by the Council's Communications Team, and have also set up a Facebook page in my capacity as Cabinet Member for Education and Schools to promote schools and education services.
6. I support the recommendation that the Corporate Director for Children's Services includes positive stories about schools in her regular Director's updates to schools and that these are displayed on school notice-boards in a format accessible for children to read.

**Councillor Evelyn Carpenter**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Schools**

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