

Yolanda Cattle
Headteacher
Village Infants Schools

Town Hall, 1 Town Square
Barking, IG11 7LU
Email: jane.hargreaves@lbbd.gov.uk
Website: www.lbbd.gov.uk

Ref:

Date: 25th November 2024

Dear Yolanda,

Village Infants – Performance & Partnership Meeting 20th November 2024

Thank you for coming to Barking town Hall to meet with Jessica and me last week. Please pass on our thanks to Harriet for joining via Teams. I explained that we had brought forward the meeting owing to our correspondence about you reducing from full-time.

We began by asking if there were any changes to your evaluation of the school's performance since we met in May. You told us that there weren't and that Richard Hunter has been helpful in forging strong links with other schools and that you had worked hard to ensure that all subjects are strong. You are confident that the school has further improved since the last Inspection – with significant investment in building cultural capital.

Jessica asked about phonics and Early Years developments. You confirmed that Little Wandle is fully embedded; there is an upward trajectory and the target for this year is above national. This all sounds very positive and it is good to hear that your new Early Years lead is a strong appointment.

We then spoke about finance. The school has moved to a deficit budget for the first time and as you said when we last met in May, this has necessitated some tough decisions about staffing. Harriet spoke about the principle of the organisational change planned being that it should affect staff at all levels in the school. Actions to date include redundancy of your music teacher, reductions in midday staff, not replacing vacancies and your own proposal to move to 0.8.

I asked about the budget gap. You didn't have the figures to hand but expect the actions planned to clear the deficit by next financial year. Regarding your own plans, the reduction in hours is likely to be from April or post Ofsted and you are working on the business case as outlined by Don Lan George.

You told us about the ongoing pressures from the number of children with high and complex needs. It was good to hear that the environmental works have helped – the spaces are high quality – it's the staffing costs and level of need which is the main pressure.

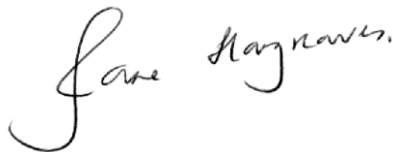
Jessica asked about your view of the capabilities of the Governing Body. It was interesting to hear of the number of recent appointments – all who bring significant experience and skills. These include two school senior leaders and two senior LA officers. Harriet, as a fairly new Chair, is being coached and supported by Richard Hunter and it was really positive to hear from her how she is appreciating the support.

Jessica did recommend that governors are encouraged to take advantage of the BDSIP governor training programme.

Finally, you told us a little about further capital works – with the nursery outdoor area as a priority. I am very pleased that the former Rectory Library development scheme has found a small amount of land to expand the Village site. Your plans for a forest school type provision sounds super.

I wish you all the best for the Ofsted Inspection when it comes, Yolanda. I know you have prepared thoroughly. Jessica looks forward to visiting next term.

With best wishes,



Jane Hargreaves
Commissioning Director, Education