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9 September 2014

Lynette Weaver
Headteacher
Sparrow Farm Infant and Nursery School
Denham Road
Feltham
TW14 0DB

Dear Mrs Weaver

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sparrow Farm
Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 September, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. Thank you 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 May 2014. 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:

- update the school action plan so leaders and governors check more regularly that the school is on track to meet its long term objectives.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, and members of the governing body, a group of children and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The inspector spoke informally to parents at the start of the day. Brief visits were made to classrooms. A range of documentation was reviewed including records to show monitoring teaching and learning, pupil performance information, children's work, attendance and safeguarding information. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection five teachers have left the school and five new teachers joined in September, including two newly qualified teachers. A permanent deputy headteacher is now in post. Major building works are underway.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and governors have responded quickly to address the areas for improvement. For example, new appointments and staff re-organisation means a permanent leadership team is in place. The headteacher, supported by her leadership team, has implemented new ideas to improve the quality of teaching. Teaching and learning is monitored more frequently to provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. The headteacher has challenged staff to raise expectations about children's achievement. This means children now receive work that is harder and matches their abilities more closely. Despite these positive developments, a few parents express mixed views about the school. Some feel new staff are difficult to approach with concerns but others are satisfied with recent developments.

Professional development and training is helping staff feel more confident to understand how to raise standards in English and mathematics. For example, teaching in letters and sounds (phonics) did not promote an improvement in children's spelling. As a result of staff training and meetings, staff now use the spelling strategies agreed and these are checked by leaders' during class observations. The feedback to staff is meaningful and helpful which contributed to improved Year 1 outcomes in the 2014 screening check.

The new leadership team benefits from support provided by the headteacher and local authority consultants. A mentor programme is helping middle leaders observe teaching and agree the points for improvement. They are now confident to provide accurate feedback to their colleagues. Senior leaders oversee this work to check that judgements are not overgenerous. Further moderation occurs through partnership observations with the local authority adviser. The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and achievement is accurate.

A new pupil performance system has been introduced. Information about every child's attainment and progress is now recorded and monitored. Robust termly pupil progress meetings occur between teachers and senior leaders, a scrutiny of English and mathematics books occurs at the same time. Leaders have a much clearer picture about children's achievement than previously. Teachers now know which pupils are at risk of underachieving and address this in their daily plans. A focus on improving the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is successful. New leaders implemented a programme of training, modelled best practice and they monitored the quality of staff interaction with children.

Consequently, outcomes in end of Foundation Stage assessments have nearly doubled from 28% in 2013 to 54% in 2014.

Pupil attainment in 2014 Key Stage 1 tests show an increase in reading and writing when compared to 2013. These test results are encouraging but there is still more work to do to accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics so attainment is above national average. The inspector carried out scrutiny of pupils' work with senior leaders. This shows achievement in English is stronger than mathematics. This is because planning and marking helps children make better progress in writing. In mathematics books some aspects, particularly numeracy are over practiced with insufficient challenge and application into problem solving. Children show positive attitudes to one another. The building works are supervised safely. Leaders are especially vigilant about absence from school. First day of absence calls and checking where children are if they are absent is robust. Attendance has increased to the national average.

The school improvement plan identifies correct priorities from the recent inspection. Leaders are held to account and allocated to different priorities to focus upon. Targets linked to success in each area are challenging, but there are no interim checks to evaluate progress towards meeting these goals.

Governors welcomed the review, completed in July, of their effectiveness. Since the inspection, they are more proactive in evaluating the school's performance. They have a clearer understanding of the links between staff performance, standards and teachers' pay. They are still developing their strategic role in holding leaders to account for higher pupil attainment.

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

External support

The local authority is providing light touch support since the inspection. They quickly brokered a consultant for the review of governance which has been well received. Early Years consultancy has had a strong impact on the quality of provision as demonstrated in the outcomes at the end of Reception.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono

Her Majesty's Inspector