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Simon Elledge
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Dear Mr Elledge

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gorrington Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 April 2016, 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 May 2015 and the visit to gather additional evidence undertaken in September 2015. This monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the school's section 5 inspection before those that took place in May and September 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- make sure that teachers continue to develop their subject knowledge in mathematics
- identify the needs of pupils who have special educational needs or disability quickly so that support is put in place swiftly and tailored to their needs.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, two members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I also held meetings with subject and phase leaders. The school's action plan was evaluated and I looked at recent information showing the progress and standards of pupils currently on roll at the school. I visited classes in the early years provision, and in key stages 1 and 2 together with you, to observe teaching and look at work in pupils' books. I spoke to pupils in lessons and around the school, and also met a group of key stage 2 pupils. Records about keeping pupils safe and about attendance were also considered. I took account of the views of 30 parents from Parent View, Ofsted's online survey tool, and the analysis of the school's own recent survey of parents' views.

Context

Since the previous inspection, 13 teachers and three members of support staff have left the school, and 14 teachers, two teaching assistants and two learning mentors have joined the school. Three governors have left and six new members have joined the governing body.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have made sure that the school's action planning focuses sharply on the main priorities for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Working closely with the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, you have set about securing improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. Your high expectations of teaching and pupils' achievement are helping to motivate staff and raise pupils' aspirations of what they can achieve. Training for teachers and teaching assistants is leading to greater consistency in teaching approaches. Subject and phase leaders are benefiting from training. They take an increasing role in leading improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The leadership team checks that teaching is improving and that it is bringing about improvements in pupils' learning. Leaders identify where teaching is effective and where it should be better. You are successfully establishing a culture where best practice is shared across the school to raise the standard of teaching. Leaders, including governors, now check the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs or disability more thoroughly than in the recent past. However, the specific needs of pupils who have special educational needs or disability are not always identified as quickly as they should be. As a result, additional support that is tailored to these pupils' needs is not always put in place soon enough.

You have improved the curriculum to help make sure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language, build up the skills they need to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. Throughout the school, pupils have more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. A particular highlight is the school's television studio, where

selected pupils are recorded presenting their work. Adults in the early years provision extend children's communication, language and literacy through high-quality discussions that increase their vocabulary. Pupils enjoy the increased opportunities for singing and pupils in Year 3 have started to learn to play the recorder.

In the early years provision, information from checks on children's learning is used more carefully than in the past to plan tasks that are suitably demanding, including for the most-able children. You have also improved the resources that are available for children's learning in the outdoor area so that activities are of equally high quality in both the inside and outdoor areas.

Leaders have increased the opportunities that pupils have to practise their writing in a wide variety of curriculum subjects. This helps pupils build their knowledge of the essential features of high-quality writing. Work in pupils' books shows that progress in writing is accelerating. Pupils typically present their work tidily and try hard to make their writing fluent. They know that this is an important skill to ensure their writing is legible.

Leaders have made sure that pupils practise reading very regularly. In discussions, pupils told me that they enjoy daily reading sessions and they enthused about their favourite authors. Training for staff has improved the teaching of phonics in the early years provision and Year 1. Assessment information suggests that improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2015 is likely to be sustained this year.

Initiatives to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics are beginning to show their effectiveness in pupils' better outcomes. The school's recent assessment information shows that new approaches to teaching mathematics are helping to raise standards. You are aware that there is more work to do to make sure that teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is consistently strong.

The governing body has been particularly effective in recruiting new members with valuable expertise. As a result, governors contribute more strategically to improving the school than in the past. Governors check regularly the progress the school is making in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. They are well informed and test the reliability of the information they receive. Leaders and governors made sure that a review of governance was completed in good time. They have responded positively to the recommendations from the review.

Pupils told me that they appreciate the changes that have been introduced recently and that these have made school more enjoyable. You have made sure that they know the importance of attending school every day. Pupils are motivated to attend regularly by weekly competitions and the opportunity to win prizes for the best attendance. You have also worked closely with parents to engage them in the work of the school, and leaders have responded quickly to their suggestions. For example, pupils can now choose from a wider variety of homework activities. The

school's own recent survey of parents' views shows that they evaluate homework and many other aspects of the school positively.

External support

You have worked effectively with the local authority and made sure that the school has benefited from additional support. This has included specific help to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as guidance to develop the curriculum, particularly in reading and writing. The local authority has also encouraged the school to establish informal partnerships with other local primary schools. These links are supporting teacher development, for example in using new assessment systems and measuring pupils' attainment accurately. Representatives from the local authority visit the school regularly and check that initiatives are securing the necessary improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes. You have also sought high-quality additional support and expertise, for example to assist the school in improving attendance and developing subject leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Her Majesty's Inspector