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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms N Parker
Headteacher
Hugh Myddelton Primary School
Myddelton Street
London
EC1R 1YJ

Dear Ms Parker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hugh Myddelton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 June 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 June 2015. 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 last section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with the senior leadership team and representatives of the governing body. I had discussions with two officers from the local authority to consider the support provided to the school since the last inspection. I looked at documents related to school improvement, safeguarding and outcomes for pupils. I conducted a tour of the school with you and other senior leaders. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their views.

Context

Since the last inspection, one of your assistant headteachers has left the school. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed and a leader responsible for inclusion has also joined the senior team. A teacher has left the Nursery. You have conducted a thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of support staff. An external review of governance was completed in the autumn term of 2015.

Main findings

You have maintained a relentless drive for improvement since the last inspection. Your work with senior leaders to further develop a culture of high expectations has been a success. Rigorous daily checks on pupils' progress, for example in reading, are starting to make a significant difference to their achievement. Your plans for improvement focus sharply on the areas identified at the last inspection. They communicate a sense of urgency and identify very clearly who is to be responsible for evaluating the impact of this work. Senior leaders say there is a sharper focus on improving what goes on in classrooms. They speak with one voice when describing the successes you have secured. Teachers say there is more time to reflect on what went well and what could be improved further. They insist that no one is left to feel that they need to work in isolation. There is a palpable team spirit evident across the whole school.

Pupils are making better progress in learning to write as a result of this work. More are now working at the levels expected for their age, even though you have introduced higher expectations in each class. You have made sure that the checks on pupils' outcomes are accurate by getting professionals from outside the school to verify your findings. Pupils benefit from more carefully considered starting points for their writing. They are given enough time to develop their ideas and to review their work. For example, teachers expect most-able pupils to cast a 'fresh eye' over their own writing and improve it further before it is marked. As a result, most-able pupils are making more rapid progress. Less confident writers are given the opportunity to write about something familiar before being asked to tackle more challenging work. For example, they have written persuasive letters to the headteacher before corresponding with the Prime Minister about rhinoceros poaching in Africa. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive skilful, effective support from teachers. During the inspection, I saw samples of pupils' writing that shows good progress as a result of this work. Children in the early years now receive better guidance when trying out activities aimed at developing their early writing skills. Boys, in particular, have benefited from this support and now make better progress.

You recently reviewed the roles and structure of teaching assistants. This is enabling them to implement agreed teaching policies more consistently. Performance objectives are now closely linked to the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The deputy headteacher has taken the lead in ensuring that the training for teaching assistants is relevant and evaluated for impact. As a result, they are

familiar with the higher expectations of your revised curriculum. They are clear about what is expected of them in each lesson they support.

The Nursery has been moved and funding has been spent on improving resources. The early years leader has made a striking and positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. New approaches to developing children's speaking and listening skills are paying off. Teaching staff ask different types of question more effectively. This allows a more natural flow of conversation between adults and children to take place. As a result, children's speaking and listening skills are rapidly improving in the current year.

You rightly realised that the expectations teachers had of pupils' behaviour and attitudes needed to be more consistent. The introduction of a value system based around presentation, participation and posture, known to everyone as the three 'p's, has been a success. Pupils say behaviour has improved because expectations are higher. Younger children say that older pupils set a good example and look after them well at playtime. They are proud of the improvements in attendance and are pleased that you insist that pupils wear the school uniform.

The training you have provided has improved the effectiveness of the questions teachers ask pupils. Teachers say that, as a result, there is more focus on getting pupils to think. Pupils know that teachers rarely accept the first answer they provide.

You have carefully considered how to encourage more parents to engage with the learning process for pupils. For example, parents in the early years are regularly invited to watch teachers demonstrate how to share a book with children.

Governors participated in an external review of their work soon after the last inspection. As a result, they are better placed to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for the impact of their work. They have acted effectively by improving the structures and systems through which they gather information about the school. They insist that school leaders keep them well informed about the impact of the plans for improvement. They are able to effectively analyse information put before them and pursue lines of enquiry more tenaciously.

External support

School leaders have successfully coordinated and balanced different sources of external support. As a result, these have had a very positive impact on the progress the school has made to tackle the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The local authority has an accurate and detailed knowledge of the school. You have made the most of the wide range of effective training and development opportunities it has been able to offer. An independent school improvement consultant has helped you to review the impact of your plans for improvement. He is providing valuable verification of your checks on the quality of provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector