

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



13 July 2016

Mrs Kamini Mistry
Acting Headteacher
Sudbury Primary School
Watford Road
Wembley
HA0 3EY

Dear Mrs Mistry

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sudbury Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 and 16 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 November 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- secure a permanent and sustainable leadership structure, and continue to develop the leadership skills of newly appointed leaders.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, the governing body and the strategic director from Brent Schools' Partnership to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. Pupils were observed around the school and during lunchtime.

Context

Since the last inspection, the chair and five other members of the governing body have left. A national leader of governance has been appointed to strengthen the governing body and he has been joined by five other new members. The substantive headteacher has resigned and the acting headteacher, who was in position at the last inspection, remains as acting headteacher. Two national leaders of education have been joint executive headteachers. Neither is acting as executive headteacher at the moment, although one is supporting the school's leadership team and developing leadership structures for the future.

Main findings

The governing body has been strengthened and it has appointed new members with the skills and experience needed to support the school fully. Where skill sets have not been forthcoming, the chair has sensibly sourced support from other agencies. Members have a secure understanding of the school's current situation. Following the resignation of the substantive headteacher, they are developing a credible plan for a strengthened and sustainable leadership structure, which is being formed through careful consideration of the options available to them. The chair of the governing body has acted on external advice to ensure that the school is meeting its obligations, as set out in its funding agreement and in law. The external review of governance is comprehensive and was completed in a timely manner. Governors use this document, alongside their own evaluations, to steer their work.

Governors make decisions in an open and transparent way, with a focus on what is best for pupils at Sudbury. They are gaining the trust of parents and staff through their open and honest engagement with stakeholders, done with an appropriate understanding of, and respect for, confidentiality.

The leadership team is being expanded to reflect the size and complexity of the school. Work to develop leaders' skills is ongoing and this is helping leaders to think and act strategically.

Leaders understand their roles and are respected within the school. Following the last inspection, they created action plans which cover the immediate areas identified in the full inspection. These action plans are leading to improvements in teaching and achievement. While these plans are useful, they are focused on the short term and do not capture the overarching and more strategic reasons why actions are being taken. For example, the phonics action plan focuses on ensuring that children have the knowledge of the sounds that letters represent so they are able to get through the phonics screening check. However, the plan does not consider why children are developing this body of knowledge; nor does it consider how teachers in key stage 2 can encourage pupils to use this body of knowledge to spell and read unfamiliar words.

Similarly, the behaviour action plan focuses on the consistent use of rewards and sanctions, but it does not articulate the school's ambitions for pupils' behaviour or personal development. As a result, the evaluation of this action plan is focused on compliance with the process, rather than the development of well-rounded young people who behave appropriately in class and around school.

Leaders and governors are being successful in calming previous tensions within the school community and my walk around the school confirmed that the school is a harmonious, caring environment. Teachers continue to have high expectations and pupils respond well to these.

School leaders and governors are realistic about what they have achieved and are driven in their desire to continue improving the school.

External support

The regional schools commissioner moved quickly to provide additional governance capacity and this has been key in adding much-needed skills and assurance to the governing body. The Brent Schools' Partnership has been active in providing support and challenge. It secured the services of the two executive headteachers who both brought stability and confidence during a very unsettled period. Executive headteachers have also provided you, the acting headteacher, with technical support and guidance to help you understand the aspects of headship which you were not adequately prepared for. This included managing large building projects and complex budgets.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector