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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Julia Roseblade
Headteacher
Goldthorn Park Primary School
Ward Road
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV4 5ET

Dear Ms Roseblade

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Goldthorn Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 October 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 March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in March 2016, 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- raise the achievement of pupils of Indian and White British origin to ensure that they are making at least as much progress as other pupils nationally
- ensure that the targets set out in the improvement plan are measurable and that the plan indicates clearly who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's actions

- investigate concerns about behaviour and safety raised by a small minority of pupils and ensure that governors receive a detailed analysis of recorded behaviour incidents.

Evidence

During the inspection visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, middle leaders, a representative from the local authority, the director of a local multi-academy trust, the chair of the governing body and a group of pupils. I spoke to three parents during an early years family learning session. The school's improvement plan was evaluated along with assessment information for current pupils. Two joint lesson observations were carried out with middle leaders.

Context

Since the last inspection a new inclusion leader has been appointed. The early years coordinator has been moved from Reception to Nursery.

Main findings

You have recognised that the changes you introduced since the previous inspection in 2014 have taken time to have an impact. After the most recent inspection in 2016 the rate of improvement has accelerated.

You have given an enhanced role to middle leaders and allocated them time to carry out their leadership roles. Those who have now been in post for some time are now more effective in monitoring and evaluating teaching. They know the strengths and weaknesses well in their phases and in their subject areas. They also act as role models for other teachers to observe in order to improve their practice.

Teaching has improved in key stage 1 and the early years. You know where teaching is not yet good in key stage 2 and have increased the level of support and accountability. Middle leaders are also involved effectively in observing teaching, analysing information on pupils' outcomes and scrutinising pupils' books. Pupil progress meetings and regular moderation every fortnight are ensuring a greater accuracy in the assessment of pupils' progress by teachers.

Where teaching is not yet good inconsistencies remain in some year groups, particularly around the extent to which most-able pupils are stretched and challenged. Lessons are planned well to cater for pupils' different needs and starting points but this does not necessarily lead to sufficient additional activities for those who finish their work quickly. Some activities go on for too long. Where pupils are given a choice, they set challenges for themselves to take on harder work. Where they are not, they do not have the chance to work in greater depth once they have finished the task expected of them. Teachers are developing well in meeting the

needs of learners of English as an additional language. They do this through modelling key words and providing structured writing tasks.

The impact of teachers' written feedback through marking is variable. A new policy was introduced in June 2016 in response to the findings of the last inspection and this is taking time to be established consistently across the school. Through regular monitoring of pupils' books, leaders have identified where marking is effective and where it is not yet as strong. Teachers are providing extension tasks and identifying where these have not been completed but then do not consistently go on to ensure that pupils complete them.

Behaviour in classrooms seen during the visit was usually good and most pupils spoken to agree with this. There were instances of minor low-level disruption where pupils became restless and bored where there was a lack of challenge. Some pupils spoken to said that they found mathematics too easy at times, although others said it was challenging. Some boys did not enjoy writing, which they said went on for too long and they became tired.

A small minority of pupils spoken to during the visit said that in some classes behaviour was very poor – where some pupils were disrupting the learning of others. This was not seen during the visit but you acknowledged that there were a very small number of recent new arrivals who had come to the school already presenting challenging behaviour.

In the most recent provisional test and assessment results for 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics was below average and the proportion achieving a higher standard in reading and mathematics was low. However, the proportion reaching a higher standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test or working at a greater depth in writing was above the national average.

The rates of progress are low for the declining population of White British pupils compared to all pupils nationally. Although Indian pupils are doing well compared to their peers in school, their outcomes are below that of other pupils nationally and well below compared to Indian pupils nationally. You have recognised this and are analysing closely the outcomes for current pupils in each year group to identify where further support is required. This has not yet been extended for outcomes for other minority ethnic pupils such as the increasing number of pupils coming from Eastern European countries.

A new scheme for mathematics to introduce the same degree of rigour to numeracy as is already in place in phonics is planned. The approach to teaching phonics has led to improving outcomes in reading in Year 1 and the early years. Gaps in teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics have been identified and are being addressed through additional training. You have recognised that a high number of pupils learning English as an additional language can read with fluency. However, as

they become more advanced bilingual learners they still have gaps in their understanding of vocabulary and idioms.

The success of the systematic approach to teaching phonics is reflected in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 in 2016 which was above average, as it was for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for children in the early years have continued to improve over time. From the very low outcomes in 2013 the proportion of children who have achieved a good level of development was above average in 2016. Outcomes were high in all aspects, including understanding the world and expressive arts and design. There are now more opportunities for pupils to have a wider experience in these areas which is leading to improved outcomes. Outcomes were slightly lower in number, shape and space although these too compared very favourably with the national average. Family learning sessions for parents of children of Nursery and Reception age are very successful in engaging a high number of parents and carers who greatly appreciate the sessions as they help them to know how to support their children at home. Children and parents are both set homework which means parents can better understand how to support their children's learning.

Leaders' improvement plan identifies the key actions from the last inspection for each month of the year and has milestones attached. The plan does not identify who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating each aspect. The milestones are not specific enough for those evaluating the plan to determine whether the school is on track to achieve them.

Governors are highly knowledgeable and experienced in education. They are supportive and challenging towards leaders over outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching. They are also forward-thinking in looking ahead to the future direction of the school and are working closely with external partners. Governors do not receive enough information on recorded behaviour incidents.

The school shows its respect for its diverse population by ensuring that events and festivals such as Diwali are recognised and celebrated. A Diwali disco on the day of the inspection visit for parents and children brought the whole school community together.

External support

The school has been active in working in partnership with the local authority through a regular series of reviews. It also started to work in partnership alongside a local successful multi-academy trust. The partnership with the trust has led to leaders and teachers working closely with other schools to develop their practice further through joint observations and team teaching. This is ensuring a greater degree of rigour and urgency in securing improvements to leadership and teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector