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Mr Paul Prest
Stanford Primary School
Chilmark Road
Norbury
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Dear Mr Prest

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stanford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 June 2017, 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 July 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 July 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Alongside other senior leaders and governors, you 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:

- develop the level of challenge in activities, so that the most able pupils make better progress
- continue to broaden the curriculum to provide a range of learning experiences for pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteachers and middle leaders. I met with four governors, including the chair of governors, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority. You and your deputy headteacher accompanied me on three

learning walks to look at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress in key stage 1, key stage 2 and in the foundation subjects. I spoke informally with key stage 2 pupils at lunchtime. I looked at pupils' work in topic folders and science books.

During the meetings, we discussed the actions taken since the last inspection. I reviewed the school's progress against the action plan and the performance information for pupils currently in the school.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been a significant number of changes in leadership. You took up your post on 1 September 2016 following the resignation of the previous headteacher. Initially your post was for one term but this has since been extended until July 2018. During the summer term and early part of the autumn term 2016, a number of governors, including the previous chair of governors, resigned and a new chair was appointed. Overall, three quarters of the governors on the governing body are new. The new governing body met in November 2016.

There have also been changes at middle leadership level. One middle leader was new to the school in September 2016 and one other had a change in role. Four new teaching staff joined the school in September 2016.

The school is fully staffed for September 2017 except for one outstanding vacancy which is in the process of recruitment.

In addition to staff changes, there has been a restructuring of support staff to better support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

Main findings

Governors have acted swiftly to address urgent concerns, raised at the last inspection, that the governing body had been failing to hold senior leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.

The new governing body has quickly formed a lively, cohesive and productive group. Governors bring a range of skills to the table to support the school's work. Governor training is a clear priority to bring governors up to speed with their responsibilities and current legislation and guidance. The resources committee and the curriculum standards committee provide a balance of challenge and support, holding leaders to account and asking challenging questions of leaders. Governors understand that the school has to act quickly to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress. Governors are honest and transparent about the issues facing the school and resolute in their commitment to improving it. Their focus is now clearly on

teaching and learning and there is a clear vision and direction of travel going forward.

You and your senior leaders work very successfully as a team. Together you have a strong vision of teaching and learning and are fully focused on developing the Stanford model. This is firmly rooted in research and evidence about what helps pupils to learn best across a range of subjects. During my visit, we saw how this is beginning to have an impact on pupils' learning, progress and personal development.

There are increasingly high levels of consistency in teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers set high expectations for pupils with clear learning intentions. Pupils' learning is purposeful because they know what they have to do to succeed.

Pupils enjoy paired work and the focus on answering in full sentences enables them to develop their oracy skills and self-confidence. Pupils' motivation is enhanced because they know that they are learning with a partner and not in isolation. Pupils begin sentences with 'we' and not 'I' and are well supported with simple and complex sentence starters to meet their needs. Pupils share mini white boards to construct sentences and answer questions. Likewise, in a science class in the school's outdoor area, pupils shared large clipboards to record their observations of frogs and insects. Ensuring that pupils have access to the outdoor area for learning is a relatively new development. You and your team are keen to extend the curriculum further to broaden the range of experiences for pupils.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in classes is a developing strength of the school. Pupils listen intently to the teachers' confident exposition and concentrate well. This has a positive impact on their personal development, as well as their learning and progress. Pupils support each other well and are kind and thoughtful towards each other.

High expectations set by staff and pupils' positive attitudes to learning enable staff to challenge pupils' understanding. For example, in a religious education class about why people marry, pupils shared their views and feelings with considerable maturity.

Work in pupils' books shows that teaching over time is increasingly well structured and sequenced. There is a high level of challenge in learning activities. In mathematics, pupils are developing reasoning skills and expected to use the correct instruments for mathematical drawings.

The middle leaders I spoke to were clear that one of the biggest changes since the last inspection has been the way that they are now held accountable for standards in their subject and area of responsibility. They are enthusiastic and passionate about achieving the best for the pupils and feel very well supported by you and senior leaders. They are working successfully with external support from Merton local authority and have access to a range of local and national middle leadership

training. Middle leaders are focused on impact not actions and have a clear understanding of what needs to happen next to take their subjects forward. They understand the whole-school priorities and appreciate the need to develop pupils' knowledge and skills across subjects. They are fully focused on developing the curriculum for pupils.

The school's plans are appropriate to tackle the areas for improvement. Leaders at all levels accurately evaluate the progress made to date and are clear about what still needs to be done.

External support

The local authority continues to support and challenge the school and has been proactive in promoting and supporting the new governing body. It has worked closely with the new chair to ensure that school leaders are supported effectively.

The school participates in challenge and support meetings so that pupils' progress is regularly scrutinised. Subject consultants from the local authority have provided training and practical support in a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Hallett
Her Majesty's Inspector