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Mrs Linda Kiernan
Eardley School
Cunliffe Street
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Dear Mrs Kiernan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Eardley School

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing and sustaining effective leadership at all levels to improve teaching, learning and assessment, so that all groups of pupils across the school make at least good progress
 - ensuring that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective across all year groups
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate and is used to support teachers in identifying appropriate next steps for learners in reading, writing and mathematics
 - further improving attendance, so that it is at least in line with the national average, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged
 - ensuring that governors rigorously hold leaders to account for pupil premium funding spending, so that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils improve in all year groups
 - ensuring that actions are taken to increase the playtime and social time that pupils are given.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the good practice that leads to stronger progress for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is shared across other year groups
 - teachers use their knowledge of the progress pupils make, so that pupils, regardless of their year group, make good progress
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, and that they meet the needs of the lowest attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - teachers provide tasks which interest and inspire pupils so that incidents of low-level disruption or unfocused behaviour become rare
 - teachers in all year groups implement all aspects of the school's mathematics curriculum, including problem solving and reasoning
 - all staff responsible for teaching phonics have the necessary training and subject knowledge to help pupils make good progress and apply their phonics skills confidently to reading and writing tasks.

■ Improve the early years provision by:

- securing effective leadership to help teachers improve their skills, so that children are able to enjoy their learning and achieve well
- ensuring that teachers in the Reception classes use the indoor and outdoor provision effectively to promote and support children’s learning across the curriculum
- making sure that the information gathered about the progress children make from their varying starting points is accurate.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance is recommended in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 27 to 28 September 2017

Evidence

This first monitoring inspection focused on the effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and the early years provision. The inspector held meetings with the head of school, senior leaders, middle leaders and groups of teaching staff. The inspector also had discussions with two members of the governing body and the link inspector from the local authority. The inspector observed lessons across all year groups, accompanied by the head of school. During these visits to lessons, the inspector talked to pupils and looked at their work. The inspector also spoke to pupils and parents informally. With senior leaders, the inspector evaluated the quality of learning in a sample of pupils' books from across the school. The inspector scrutinised a variety of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, minutes of strategy group meetings, the school's action plans and self-evaluation, records of attendance, and external reviews of the school.

Context

Since the inspection in March 2017, the leadership team has been restructured. A number of senior leaders have left, including the interim executive headteacher, a deputy headteacher and the school business manager. A new interim headteacher has been in post since May 2017 and works closely with the head of school. The school appointed a deputy headteacher with responsibility for inclusion. Leaders created additional middle leadership posts in English and curriculum development, and appointed staff internally to these roles. The school also internally appointed an early years leader. A strategy group comprising representatives from the local authority, two governors, the head of school, both assistant headteachers and the interim headteacher was set up to oversee the school's transition to an academy. The school is still waiting for a sponsor before they can begin the conversion process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The interim headteacher and head of school have created a clear vision for improving the school. They are clear about what needs to be done and have put actions in place to secure improvement. The positive impact of these actions is starting to show, but it is at an early stage. School leaders know they have a lot of work to do and are not shying away from the challenges ahead of them. Staff are fully on board and share the vision of the leadership team. They are positive about the future of the school and feel galvanised, as a team, to make Eardley a better school.

The head of school has provided much-needed stability to the school. It is evident that staff, parents, pupils and the local authority value her hard work and

commitment. Parents are unanimous in their opinion that the school is improving and are confident in the school leaders' ability to take the school forward. They can see the positive impact that the head of school and her team are bringing, such as improved communication from the school and a stable teaching staff. Leaders have been swift to address ineffective teaching, but are acutely aware of previous recruitment issues. They have supported teachers who show potential and commitment to the school. As a result, staffing is at its most stable in recent years.

It is evident, not just from the inspection report, but from talking to parents and staff, that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has to improve. The new deputy headteacher is an experienced special educational needs coordinator. She has been in her role just three weeks, and has started to work on key priorities, such as ensuring that the special educational needs register is accurate, identifying pupils' needs correctly, considering which pupils need an education, health and care plan, supplying teachers with necessary information about pupils and reviewing the deployment of teaching assistants. Leaders recognise that teaching staff need more help with providing the appropriate support in lessons to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The new middle leader posts have added a layer of leadership, providing further capacity. Middle leaders are keen to take on responsibility and develop their leadership skills. An extensive training programme is in place to help them with their roles. The level of support they have received has given them confidence to carry out their responsibilities and they have made a strong start.

Leaders are monitoring more closely the quality of teaching and learning through, for example, weekly learning walks around school and scrutiny of pupils' work. They have ensured that experienced and/or effective staff are sharing their expertise. Staff talk positively of the new 'surgeries' on offer after school, where they receive personalised guidance and support.

School leaders reviewed assessment procedures in the summer term. Leaders accepted that work in books did not match teachers' assessments. They carried out a scrutiny of every pupil's work and compared it to teachers' assessments. This has given them confidence in the accuracy of pupils' starting points from September 2017. There are still some discrepancies which leaders are working on, and they have a monitoring schedule in place to check the accuracy of assessments.

Overall attendance has improved slightly but is still below the national average. School leaders are more rigorous in how they analyse weekly attendance figures, quickly identifying areas of concern. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has also increased and persistent absence has significantly decreased.

School leaders responded immediately to Ofsted's recommendation about increasing playtime. Playtimes and lunchtimes have been lengthened and pupils are highly positive about the longer playtimes. They enjoy using the range of equipment

available and play together well.

The governing body has not taken effective action to improve the school, following the Ofsted judgement. Despite the recommendation, a review of governance has not taken place. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are still not challenging leaders effectively and focus on the operational running of the school, rather than on their role in supporting the school. Governors have not undertaken training which would help them to perform their roles effectively. There has not been a review of pupil premium funding, although one is scheduled to take place this term. Since the inspection, the strategy action group has effectively been leading and managing the school, in place of the governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

There is still variation in the quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons. School leaders are aware of this and have started to put measures in place. They have delivered a range of training sessions on particular aspects of teaching and are planning sessions to model effective teaching. Lessons are generally well planned and structured. Teachers are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to share ideas so that they can be more involved in lessons. They are encouraging pupils to think and explain their reasoning. There is evidence that teachers are starting to plan work that is tailored to pupils' needs, although sometimes the level of work is not appropriate. Often, work is simply not challenging enough and teachers do not have consistently high expectations.

Leaders were hugely disappointed in the 2017 key stage 2 provisional outcomes in mathematics and English. Above all, they express a moral duty to not let pupils down. Leaders know that many pupils have significant gaps in basic mathematics skills and knowledge as a legacy of weak teaching. As a result, they have made mathematics a priority this term and a new mathematics programme has been rolled out across the school.

The mathematics scheme is at an early stage. Staff have received comprehensive training, but more guidance is needed to help them deliver the new programme. Analysis of books indicates that the new approach to teaching mathematics is not yet consistent. However, there is evidence of pupils developing their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Leaders know it will take time to embed this but recognise the urgent need to improve pupils' learning.

Following a review of the curriculum, school leaders launched a new, more creative curriculum in September 2017. Subjects are linked through a different topic each half-term. Pupils talk enthusiastically of the 'wow' days at the start of the new topic and they are excited at the prospect of more educational trips and visits. Parents have welcomed the new home learning projects. Although pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved, pupils are not always fully engaged in lessons, particularly lower down the school. Leaders and teachers are confident that behaviour will

continue to improve as teachers use the new curriculum resources to make lessons more interesting. The new, simpler behaviour system promotes positive behaviour and pupils are quick to respond to teachers' instructions.

The school is proud of its strong writing outcomes in all key stages, which have been externally verified. A new reading programme is on hold, while teachers get to grips with the mathematics scheme. Teachers are continuing to develop guided reading and promote a love of reading, for example through developing the introduction of weekly library lessons. Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) teachers have received training to improve their subject knowledge. The new English leader is working on developing phonics even further this year. In 2017, 80% of pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics. This is the highest outcome in phonics for the school in recent years.

Leaders recognised that interventions to support pupils in their work were not having a positive impact and have changed their approach as a result. Teachers now identify individual pupils who have not grasped a particular aspect of the day's learning and are beginning to provide additional support on the same day. This means that misconceptions are dealt with earlier. Class teachers have more information about their pupils' prior attainment and can target pupils who are not making strong progress more quickly.

Early years provision

The new early years leader is fully aware of the changes needed to improve the early years provision. She is still developing her leadership skills, but is well-supported by senior leaders. Baseline assessments for this year's cohort are almost complete and it is evident that staff know the children well. Senior leaders have helped early years staff in gathering this information. They have scheduled moderation for this term to ensure that assessments are accurate. In 2017, 74% of children achieved a good level of development, which is an increase from previous years.

Staff in early years have received training, particularly on recording children's development regularly and accurately. The early years leader has begun to support teaching across both Nursery and Reception classes. She has reviewed the outdoor and indoor provision, ensuring it is a more language-rich environment, as speech and language development are a key focus in early years. The outdoor provision is well-resourced, but staff are not yet using it as effectively as they could.

External support

The local authority has given extensive support to the school since the March 2017 inspection. It has helped school leaders to devise the action plan and has taken an active role in the school strategy group. The local authority appointed the interim headteacher and school leaders are benefiting from working with a highly

experienced and successful leader. The local authority has continued the secondment of an assistant headteacher and has also seconded a finance manager. Additional support has been provided from a range of external consultants, delivering training to staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Links with a local school have been established in order to provide effective support in checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments. The link inspector from the local authority has a very accurate and realistic picture of the school's overall performance from the various visits she has made to the school.