

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 December 2018

Mrs Karen Cohen
Clore Shalom School
Hugo Gryn Way
Shenley
Radlett
Hertfordshire
WD7 9BL

Dear Mrs Cohen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Clore Shalom School

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in September 2017, 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 for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- the action plan focuses fully and specifically on each of the areas for development detailed in the previous inspection report, and includes measurable success criteria, dates for actions and milestones for improvement
- self-evaluation is appropriately self-critical and analytical, so that it becomes a key diagnostic tool for improving the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, governors

and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You took me on a tour of the site and we observed teaching and learning throughout the school. I looked at a number of school documents and checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks.

Context

Since the previous inspection, four teachers have left the school. New appointments have been made and the school is currently fully staffed. The chair of the governing body took up her role in November 2017, having previously been the vice-chair. Internal changes have been made to the building to create additional working areas from previously unusable spaces, such as at the end of corridors.

Main findings

The school's leaders and governors were disappointed that the school was judged to require improvement, for the second time, in September 2017. However, you quickly accepted that the judgement was the right one and set about making improvements promptly.

The school's action plan has some strengths. In broad terms, it covers most of the areas for improvement identified by the September 2017 inspection. This is enabling you to move the school in the right direction. The plan includes a range of appropriate actions and has been updated to show the school's progress towards achieving them. The plan includes success criteria and notes the resources needed for specific actions.

However, the plan does not address the areas for improvement directly enough. You chose not to use the precise wording from the inspection report as the basis for your action plan. As a result, some of the deliberate nuances of the wording have been lost or are difficult to identify in the action plan. For example, the inspection report details a number of ways in which the school should improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including by 'ensuring that all teachers model the school's expectation for handwriting and feedback when they are writing in pupils' books'. This does not feature in the school's action plan.

Although the plan includes success criteria, these are not sharp enough and are open to interpretation. For example, 'children choosing to learn outside', in the early years section of the plan, leaves unanswered questions as to when, why and how this would indicate success. The monitoring role of the governors is not clear. The plan does not include deadlines for actions or milestones to show what should happen by when.

Senior leaders and governors know the school well, and this is enabling them to take the right action to improve the school. However, self-evaluation processes are

underdeveloped. The school's self-evaluation document is, essentially, a list of things you do well rather than a record of a diagnostic and analytical process. As a result, self-evaluation is too much about celebrating what works well and is getting better, and not enough about identifying what still needs to improve.

You have taken successful action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Leaders have worked closely with individual teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. Where necessary, leaders have not shied away from having difficult conversations about underperformance or unmet targets. Leaders have been persistent in their bid to ensure that only good teaching is good enough.

As well as holding individual teachers to account, you have taken successful action more broadly to provide a wide range of continuing professional development opportunities for staff. You are able to show where these are having an impact on improving practice within the school. For example, staff training has focused on raising expectations and on ensuring that approaches to teaching and learning are consistent. Leaders say that, as a result, teachers now check pupils' learning, and offer appropriate support and challenge, more effectively. Your monitoring rightly shows that the quality of teaching is now much better throughout the school.

Leaders have focused well on improving the quality of the early years provision. For example, children are now provided with a much broader range of learning opportunities in the Reception class, and planning is more responsive to children's individual needs and interests. You arranged for a full review of early years to be carried out and you have responded well to the review's findings and recommendations. You acknowledge that there is work still to do in this area, but it is clear that the provision is improving.

Much has been done to improve the quality of leadership. At the time of the previous inspection, leadership responsibilities were carried, largely, by you and the part-time deputy headteacher. These responsibilities are now shared much more widely and an effective senior leadership team is developing.

The actions taken by leaders have been successful and have led to improvements in pupils' outcomes. It is clear that both attainment and progress are rising throughout the school. Leaders and governors have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are determined that outcomes will continue to improve.

External support

The local authority is providing the school with appropriate support. A school improvement partner visits regularly, both to support and to challenge leaders. At the request of the school, two members of the local authority's early years team carried out a full review of the provision. They provided the school with a detailed report about both the strengths and areas for development in early years. Early

years advisers have also provided support in addressing the weaker areas of practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector