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Mr David Ellison
Principal
Winston Way Academy
Winston Way
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Dear Mr Ellison

Short inspection of Winston Way Academy

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2019 with Sheila Cohring, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in 2012.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

The new leadership team is tackling the school's recent difficulties with urgency and purpose. You are supported well by trustees, who have provided additional temporary leadership capacity from the trust's national team.

There have been six headteachers at the school since 2013. You have been working in the school since April 2019, and were appointed as the principal in June 2019. Leaders have identified the most important actions to improve the school. Together, you have quickly made a positive impact. Teachers I spoke to during the inspection said that they are benefiting from professional development focused on improving teaching. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are generally positive. You ensure that poor behaviour is logged, but incidents are not routinely followed through in a consistent way. Some pupils said that bullying is not tackled swiftly enough.

A small number of parents responded to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire. Most agreed that their children are taught well. However, some parents who spoke to inspectors said that they were unhappy about the many changes to leadership in

recent years. The school's website does not include all the information which parents are entitled to access.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff understand safeguarding guidance and procedures. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school are carried out and recorded correctly.

Safeguarding posters displayed around the school remind staff and visitors that they are all responsible for keeping children safe. Leaders act promptly when there are concerns. They work effectively with local partnerships to ensure that families get timely support.

Staff place the welfare of pupils at the heart of their work. Recent staff training has ensured that all staff recognise when a pupil may be at risk. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on three aspects of the school's work. The first of these was to consider the effectiveness of leaders and those responsible for governance during a turbulent time for the school.
- The new leadership team acted promptly when confronted with significant challenges. For example, they identified shortcomings in the school's work to keep children safe, and swiftly undertook an audit of the system in place. They worked closely with the local authority's safeguarding team to make sure that any concerns about children's safety had been appropriately referred for action. Additional staff training was arranged. Leaders met members of staff individually to assure themselves that staff were confident to raise any concerns they might have about children.
- Senior leaders from the trust have worked closely with the leadership team to reach an accurate view of the school's performance. Leaders have quickly put this information to use, providing support and challenge to teachers at all levels.
- Teachers have responded positively to the training they have received. Immediate improvements have been made to the teaching of English and mathematics. For example, in Year 1 there is now focus on helping pupils to use their knowledge about phonics to improve their writing. In Year 5, teachers ensure that pupils are challenged in lessons. Teachers are developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, over time. Changes are at a very early stage of implementation.
- Trustees have an accurate view of the difficulties faced by the school. They have provided additional leadership support from the trust's central team to bring stability to the school. They plan to put a strong, permanent leadership team in place now that they have appointed a principal.

- Our second area of focus was to evaluate the quality of the curriculum, beyond English and mathematics. This is a school priority for improvement.
- The curriculum has been focused on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. As a result, other areas of the curriculum are not as well developed.
- Work in pupils' books shows that time is given to different subjects to ensure that the curriculum is covered. However, it does not ensure that pupils deepen their learning across a range of subjects. When activities do not build on pupils' previous learning, this limits the progress they make. As a result, the curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders are aware of these weaknesses, and they have begun to tackle them. For example, teachers say that recent training helps them to improve their lesson planning. One teacher told the inspection team: 'We are at the beginning of a journey, and our feelings are positive'. This comment reflects that many initiatives are new. As a result, it is too early to judge the impact of leaders' work to improve the quality of the curriculum.
- Our third area of focus was the teaching of reading. Our observations in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' books revealed an effective approach to the teaching of phonics. Consequently, pupils learn to read accurately and fluently. Leaders have worked in key stage 1 to improve the teaching of writing. Pupils consistently apply their phonic knowledge to spell simple words.
- However, children do not routinely share books with adults in the early years, and there are not enough books available. Some older pupils had books which were so badly damaged that they were unreadable. Some pupils in Year 2 had reading books which were too easy. Overall, the teaching of reading is not effective enough to make sure that pupils make strong progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new leadership team acts quickly to improve the school
- an effective curriculum, supported by training for staff, ensures progression in each subject
- teaching challenges all pupils so that they make strong progress in reading and develop a love of books.

I am copying this letter to the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redbridge. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julian Grenier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders from the trust and had a telephone conversation with a trustee.

We made visits to lessons, accompanied by senior leaders.

We held discussions with pupils and parents. We also took account of 14 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

We sampled pupils' work in a range of subjects.

We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at break and lunchtime.

We reviewed a wide range of management documentation provided by leaders. This included documents related to safeguarding, the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, governance and published test results.