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Dear Mrs Murdoch

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 September 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 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.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that a systematic approach is taken to teaching phonics across the school and that reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge
- further strengthen teachers' subject knowledge, enabling them to implement the newly introduced curriculum effectively.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteachers, headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers, members of the governing body and teachers. I also met with the senior school improvement adviser and assistant

director from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited all year groups in key stages 1 and 2 to look at learning. I spoke to pupils and teachers and looked at pupils' work while in classrooms. The school's action plan was evaluated. I considered a range of school documents, including the reviews of safeguarding and pupil premium provision at the school.

Context

Since the previous inspection, many changes to the school's leadership have occurred. The school started working in partnership with the Mayflower Federation in September 2019. A new headteacher was appointed at the same time and is being supported by two executive headteachers from the federation. An existing governor became the new chair of governors in November 2018.

Main findings

The newly appointed headteacher and executive headteachers have made improving the quality of education their main priority. These new leaders have clear vision and provide strong direction. Over the first three weeks of term they have gained an insightful knowledge of the school. However, actions taken between the last inspection and the start of this term have not been rapid enough. As things stand, the school is not on track to becoming good. Leaders and governors have not had high enough expectations. The quality of education in the school has improved too slowly.

The new leadership team has placed a focus on staff professional development. This includes team planning across the federation. Newly established action plans to tackle the areas requiring improvement cover all the issues that need to get better. However, due to the short period of time that they have been in place, it is too early to see their full impact.

Governors know that the school is not making rapid enough progress towards becoming a good school. The governing body has recently changed the way that it oversees the school's work. Governors now carry out a wider range of activities that inform them about the day-to-day experiences of pupils. Their supervision of the school's work to keep pupils safe is effective. Governors are now taking decisive action including approving the partnership with Mayflower Federation.

An external review of pupil premium funding identified strengths and areas for further improvement. However, the report does not provide the information that leaders need to raise disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders and governors are planning to rectify this by carrying out another full review of the pupil premium funding.

The quality of education has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress and attainment are not strong across the school. Standards in both key stages 1 and 2 for reading, writing and mathematics are below national expectations.

The content of the phonics programme is not well structured or sequenced to support pupils' progress with reading. The teaching of reading is inconsistent. Some staff lack the knowledge to teach phonics effectively as they have received limited professional development. The books that pupils read do not show clear progression in building phonics knowledge. Pupils are provided with books that contain words they cannot sound out, requiring them to guess at unfamiliar words.

Many pupils in the school have gaps in what they know and can do. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is weak in some areas of the curriculum. The work that pupils are given is not coherently sequenced. They are not always provided with learning activities at the right level of challenge. The quality of education is not sharply focused on ensuring that pupils develop detailed knowledge and achieve well.

External support

Regular reports from local authority officers have provided leaders and governors with information about the school's progress. These have raised concerns about aspects of the school's improvement. The local authority took decisive action to broker the partnership with the Mayflower Federation, and thus provide leadership and additional support for the school. Governors are receiving external support from a national leader of governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hook
Her Majesty's Inspector