

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



8 April 2020

Mrs L Bridgwood  
Headteacher  
Goldsmith Primary Academy  
Goldsmith Road  
Harden  
West Midlands  
WS3 1DL

Dear Mrs Bridgwood

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Goldsmith Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 2020, 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.

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:

- incorporate the recommendations from the recent pupil premium review into the whole-school improvement plan so that leaders and governors can check the impact of actions taken within given timescales
- ensure that close attention is paid to developing early writing skills, including correct letter formation and pencil grip, so that more children are well prepared for Year 1.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the director of primary education from Windsor Academy Trust (WAT) and members of your senior leadership team to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with the chair of the academy's local advisory board (LAB). The school improvement plan was evaluated. I checked a range of documentation, including the recent external review report about the school's use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. I also examined documents and information relating to attendance. I met with pupils formally and informally. I spoke to parents in the playground at the beginning of the school day. You joined me on brief visits to classrooms to review pupils' learning and talk to pupils about their work.

## **Context**

There have been significant changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection. You joined the school in January 2020 as its permanent headteacher. The previous substantive headteacher left the post in August 2019. Prior to your appointment, the school was led by an interim headteacher, with support from the WAT. An additional deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2019. An assistant headteacher has been appointed and is due to take up post in September 2020. There have also been several changes to teaching staff since the last inspection. A new chair of the academy's LAB has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

Despite some turbulence in staffing since the last inspection, leaders have kept the school on track and focused on the areas for improvement. The WAT leaders have reorganised the school's senior leadership roles and responsibilities and appointed additional leaders. This has strengthened the capacity of leadership and helped to sustain the drive for improvement.

In the short time that you have been headteacher, you have won the respect of staff and pupils. You, other senior leaders and a committed staff form a strong, united team. Everyone shares a sense of urgency and a determination to raise the quality of education. A 'can-do' attitude is alive across the school.

The school improvement plan focuses on actions that will make the biggest difference to pupils' education and life chances. Actions are tied to precise targets and challenging timescales. The plan includes all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. With the trust's director of primary, you frequently review progress against the targets and timescales. You adapt actions that are not working well so that no time is wasted. The plan is an effective working document. It is helping leaders to drive improvement at a good pace. Leaders are realistic and honest about assessing the progress that the school has made since the last inspection. They have an accurate picture of the work that still needs to be done.

Senior leaders have established a collaborative approach to professional development. They effectively coach, mentor and influence the work of middle leaders and teachers. As a result, staff work effectively and flexibly together to support pupils' learning and ensure that learning time is used well. This contributes to the purposeful learning atmosphere around the school. Teachers value the support and the instant feedback on their teaching. This is helping teachers to continually improve.

Middle leaders are becoming more effective in their roles. They value the professional development opportunities provided by the WAT. They are all involved in research-based professional development. This is helping them to develop and strengthen their leadership skills and to address the priorities for their areas of responsibility. However, these developments are yet to have their full impact on the school.

Since the last inspection, a considerable amount of work has been done to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and mathematics. Subject leaders and teachers have benefited from the effective training and support provided by the multi-academy trust's English and mathematics specialists. This has improved teachers' subject knowledge and provided greater consistency in the quality of teaching in these subjects.

Pupils' writing books show that there is a much tighter focus on improving spelling and addressing errors in basic punctuation. Teachers have a better understanding of the age-appropriate guidance and spelling lists provided in Appendix 1 of the English national curriculum. This has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve and by when. Work in pupils' books shows that the number of repeated errors in basic punctuation or common spellings is becoming less frequent over time.

In mathematics, work in pupils' books shows that there are daily opportunities for pupils to practise and recall basic mathematical facts. Pupils enjoy these activities and say that they are getting better at 'quickly remembering times tables and maths facts'. There are regular opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge when reasoning and solving problems. Pupils use mathematical language to explain their thinking. One pupil told me that, 'The maths learning board reminds me about things like equivalent measures – or whatever we're working on. It's useful.' This helps pupils to know and remember more over time. There are encouraging signs to indicate that a higher proportion of pupils than previously are making strong progress in mathematics.

Since the last inspection, the school has become part of an English Hub. This support, alongside leaders' actions, has led to further improvements in the quality of education. Staff have benefited from external training and from internal coaching and mentoring provided by school leaders. The weakest readers have extra help

from the most qualified teachers. There are signs that an increasing number of children are working at the age-appropriate phase in phonics. There are early signs that improved phonics knowledge is beginning to strengthen children's early writing skills. However, specific skills, such as correct pencil grip and letter formation, need further attention so that more children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders and governors are showing a determination to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The chair of the LAB has recently taken responsibility for this aspect of the school's work. She is working closely with a deputy headteacher. An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding was undertaken in December 2019. Leaders responded quickly to address the recommended areas for development. Books trawls and pupil progress meetings now have a close focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium strategy statement has been revised. It includes specific and manageable targets to address the key recommendations from the review. By fully incorporating this into the whole-school improvement plan, leaders and governors will be able to check the impact of actions taken to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils more effectively.

### **External support**

Since the last inspection, the school has received effective support from the WAT. There is now good capacity within school to sustain further improvements. This is to the credit of the trust. Directors have ensured that the school has remained stable through a period of significant staff turbulence. School leaders, including the LAB, work closely with the trust's director for primary. He plays a central role in the school's continued improvement. The WAT leaders, at all levels, have been diligent in exercising their duties to oversee the school's improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local advisory board, the chief executive officer of the WAT, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram

**Ofsted Inspector**