

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Eileen Rogers
Gorse Ride Junior School
Gorse Ride South
Finchampstead
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 4JJ

Dear Miss Rogers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gorse Ride Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 8 June 2021, 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(2) 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the teaching of reading for the weakest readers by making sure that all staff are well trained and that the books pupils read help them practise the sounds they are learning
- continue to review the curriculum in all subjects to make sure that plans explicitly identify the essential knowledge pupils need to know.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership team and to governance. Senior leaders now work across the infant and junior schools in the federation. The leadership team is made up of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, who job-share the role, two assistant headteachers, the inclusion manager and the school business manager. The chair of governors took up the role in September 2020. The governing body also works across the two schools in the federation.

Main findings

Key appointments to your leadership team are having a positive impact on the school's vision for a well-considered and ambitious curriculum. You are improving the provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Aspirations for what your staff and pupils can achieve are high.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, you and your team have made strong headway in planning the school's curriculum. Plans in most subjects are now well embedded. This is because staff have carefully considered the order in which pupils are taught the important knowledge. However, there is more work to do to review planning in subjects such as art and design and technology. Nonetheless, subject leaders are continually reviewing and adapting plans to ensure that the curriculum is the best it can be for all learners.

The actions you and your team have taken to improve writing are proving successful. Pupils look forward to lessons. Teachers place an emphasis on wider reading to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils are keen to use their ideas and newly learned vocabulary across a range of subjects. Pupils are proud of what they achieve, and rightly so.

You, along with your team, have carefully reviewed the school's teaching and learning policy. You have shared this widely with staff. As a result, there is now a consistent approach to delivering the curriculum across the school.

You ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND access a broad curriculum. Teachers adapt plans to take account of these pupils' individual needs and provide helpful resources. Staff support pupils well in lessons. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND learn and do as well as others.

You have put in place a phonics programme across both schools in the federation. This is helping to ensure that younger pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. However, there are a small number of pupils who join the junior school with gaps in their phonic knowledge. Currently, staff do not make sure that these pupils catch up and learn to read as quickly as they should. Staff require additional training

in this area. In addition, the books that these pupils read are not well matched to the sounds they learn. Some books are too hard or too easy. Pupils often read these books for far too long, which is hindering their progress. You are aware this must be tackled urgently.

Additional support

You, your leaders and staff are continuing to benefit from external support brokered by the local authority. The local teaching alliance is providing coaching for senior leaders as well as focused peer-to-peer support around curriculum implementation. Subject leaders receive expert training from the local English and mathematics Hubs. Governors are benefiting from support from the local authority on their roles.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, pupils and staff to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited several lessons with you and the inclusion manager. I listened to pupils read. I spoke to pupils about their work. I held online meetings with representatives of the local authority and several governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered a range of documentation, including your improvement plans and evaluation of the quality of education. I checked the single central register and discussed procedures with the member of staff who maintains it. I also considered the 126 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the 20 responses to the confidential staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation
Her Majesty's Inspector