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Natalie Langtree
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Langtree

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to London Meed Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 three 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:

- implement the newly chosen phonics programme and ensure that all staff are trained to teach it effectively

- further develop and implement the school's curriculum in all subjects and across all year groups, including early years
- ensure that there is a robust system whereby pupils' needs are identified swiftly so that the right support can be identified and put in place
- further strengthen staff's knowledge and skills so they can support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with their learning effectively.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection in October 2019, there have been changes to the leadership of the school. The current headteacher, who has been leading the school in an acting capacity since October 2019, was appointed as the substantive headteacher in March 2021. Two governors have joined the governing body and many of the governing body roles have been reviewed.

There are planned changes to the leadership structure of the school which will take effect in September 2021.

Main findings

You and your team are united in making London Meed 'the school we want it to be'. You are successfully galvanising the team to bring about much-needed change. The recently relaunched school values of community, bravery, resilience, curiosity and respect are having a positive impact on pupils' experiences at school. You have restructured the leadership team, which is enabling leaders to be more effective in their work. Parents, carers, staff and governors appreciate the improvements being made. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote: 'The great leadership of the newly appointed permanent headteacher has strengthened the stability and sense of community within the school.'

Despite the challenges over the last year, you and the leadership team have made headway in planning the school's curriculum. Subject leaders are clear about their roles and are in the process of bringing about the necessary improvements. They have carefully considered the skills they want pupils to have. They are now starting to identify the important knowledge pupils should learn and are checking that it is implemented well across all classes, including in Reception. This work is under way and, importantly, everyone knows exactly what needs to be done.

You are transforming the culture of reading. The new library, located as you enter the school, exemplifies this. Teachers are using high-quality texts to enhance pupils' vocabulary and help their reading and writing skills. You have communicated your high expectations for reading to parents and pupils. Pupils enthusiastically discuss books that interest them.

Since the previous inspection, you have adjusted some aspects of the teaching of early reading. These include providing new books that match the sounds that pupils are learning. However, the delivery of phonics is holding the most able readers back and the weakest readers are not being supported effectively to catch up. You recognise that the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. You are addressing this by moving to a new phonics programme and providing staff with training to teach this.

Expectations for what children can do in early years are rising. Children are increasingly secure in their understanding of number in mathematics and are getting off to a quicker start with their reading. Nonetheless, more work is necessary to develop the early years curriculum.

You have high aspirations for pupils with SEND. You are determined that these pupils have access to a broad curriculum, are well cared for, and fully included in all aspects of school life. However, you recognise that pupils' needs are not swiftly identified, and staff are not as well trained as they could be in how to support pupils with SEND effectively.

Additional support

You are benefiting from the local authority's monitoring and support. You have sensibly commissioned an external review of the provision for pupils with SEND. You are working with the local authority on the findings and actions identified in this report. The local authority has, more recently, undertaken a review of early reading and looked at the provision for disadvantaged pupils. You are working closely with a national leader of education, focusing on improving the curriculum. Subject leaders are working with local school hubs around curriculum planning and implementation. Governors are receiving training from the local authority to further develop their roles.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, pupils, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I considered monitoring reports from the local authority, sampled curriculum planning and reviewed the school's improvement plans. I took into account the 192 responses from Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, this academic year, including 10 free-text comments made during this inspection and 47 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation
Her Majesty's Inspector