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Paul Lufkin
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Lufkin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Wimbledon Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 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 received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

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:

- ensure that what children learn in the early years feeds into their learning in Year 1, particularly in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Context

Since the last inspection in September 2018, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school. The school federated with Wimbledon Park Primary School in September 2019 and you became the executive headteacher. The governing body merged under the federation but retained the same chair of governors. Also, in September 2019, the deputy headteacher was promoted to head of school and new leaders for early years and science were appointed.

Main findings

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are taking the actions needed to improve the school quickly. The federation has supported your work to implement the new curriculum. Leaders are in place for all subjects and they have mapped out clearly what they want pupils to know and remember in Years 1 to 6.

The school is an early adopter of the new early years foundation stage framework. Leaders have introduced new phonics and mathematics programmes for the Nursery and Reception classes. These are making a difference. Staff now have higher expectations of what children can do. As a result, staff know how to prepare children for their learning in Year 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.

The new phonics programme was introduced to the early years and Years 1 and 2 in January 2019. The programme provides a consistent approach to early reading. There are enough expert teachers to implement the programme effectively. Leaders ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 who need to catch up with their reading are given the support they need. These pupils read every day with members of staff. Staff make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they have learned. Leaders have supported parents and carers, for example through phonics workshops, to help their children with reading at home.

In mathematics, leaders and teachers have broken down the intended curriculum into small steps. These smaller steps are helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to get better at mathematics. Children in the early years now enter Year 1 with the mathematical knowledge they need to succeed at the next stage of learning.

The science curriculum is sequenced to allow pupils to build on key knowledge from Years 1 to 6. Staff check what pupils know and remember regularly. Teachers in the early years and Year 1 discuss informally what children have learned in science. However, curriculum plans do not set out what Reception children need to know in order to be ready for learning science in Year 1. Similarly, leaders have not fully considered how the early years curriculum will prepare children for their future learning in history and geography.

Weaknesses identified in governance during the previous inspection have been resolved. Governors have systems in place to support leaders and hold them to account. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's current context. They use committee meetings effectively to support the school's work. Governors ask leaders questions to find out about the quality of education pupils receive. COVID-19 has meant that governors have had to do some things differently. For example, their visits to the school to see for themselves the quality of education did not happen in the same way. Governors plan to reinstate these visits so that they can find out more about the impact of leaders' actions.

You and the leadership team support staff in their roles and with their workload. Parents are positive about the school and its leadership. Both staff and parents acknowledge the improvements made since the previous inspection.

Additional support

The local authority continues to provide some support to the school through an improvement adviser. The local authority's brokering of you, initially as interim headteacher and now as the executive headteacher, has helped build capacity, particularly with leaders' ability to sustain improvements. Leaders continue to source support from the federation, other local schools, subject experts and support hubs as necessary.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the head of school, representatives of those responsible for governance, representatives of the local authority and other leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons with leaders, sampled a range of pupils' books and reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the school's plans for improvement. I also held discussions with staff and pupils and reviewed Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Colenso
Her Majesty's Inspector