

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 June 2023

Jennifer Seabright
Headteacher
Alexandra Park Junior School
Brook Lane
Oldham
Greater Manchester
OL8 2BE

Dear Mrs Seabright

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Alexandra Park Junior School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023 on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with staff and looked at curriculum documentation and pupils' books. I also reviewed the single central record and the school improvement plan. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Alexandra Park Junior School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- Continue to identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils have the writing knowledge they need for the next stage of their education.

- Develop the strategies that teachers use to check what pupils know and remember in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Main findings

Since the previous graded inspection, you and other leaders have taken appropriate action to address the areas identified for improvement. For example, you have improved the support that teachers receive for delivering the mathematics curriculum. As a result, teachers are beginning to implement the mathematics curriculum effectively. For instance, teachers are now selecting lesson activities that help pupils to learn and remember the curriculum better.

You have implemented a whole-school approach to teaching phonics and early reading, which is being followed consistently well by all staff. Pupils in key stage 2 who need extra help in learning phonics also benefit from a carefully constructed phonics programme, delivered by well-trained staff. New arrivals to the school, including those pupils who speak English as an additional language, learn phonics more successfully now than they did in the past. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds they have learned. This is helping to improve pupils' fluency, so they experience greater success when reading.

In 2022, pupils did not attain as well as other pupils nationally in writing by the end of Year 6. While the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted pupils' progress, you and other leaders have identified areas of the writing curriculum that need to be improved. These improvements have recently been implemented. They include a focus on teaching spelling, the accurate use of punctuation and grammar, and developing pupils' vocabulary.

In a number of subjects, including mathematics and reading, you and other leaders have set out curriculums that are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These subject curriculums are carefully ordered and outline the important knowledge that pupils should learn and remember. However, not all subject curriculums are as well developed. Teachers are not clear on all the important knowledge they should teach in these subjects. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects.

You have developed effective assessment strategies to check that pupils have learned the curriculum in English and mathematics. Teachers use this assessment information well. They adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that they design learning activities that match pupils' needs. This is not the case in other subjects. Your work to develop assessment strategies in these subjects is at an earlier stage. Consequently, in these subjects, learning activities are not as well matched to the needs of the pupils.

The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. Since the previous inspection, you have commissioned an external review of governance. Following this review, you have recruited new members to the governing body who have relevant education experience

and expertise. This is helping governors to be increasingly confident in holding you and other leaders to account.

You have improved the capacity of leadership within the school. Subject leaders have benefited from a programme of professional development. These leaders now better understand their roles and responsibilities. Many subject leaders now have better oversight of their subjects across the school. They carry out their roles with increasing rigour and autonomy.

You are making the most of all the support available to you from the local authority and through the schools that you network with. You have managed this support effectively to ensure that staff receive the right help at the right time.

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

Yours sincerely

David Robinson
His Majesty's Inspector