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Miss Karen Waller
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Dear Miss Waller

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eton Wick CofE First School

Following my visit to your school on 3 April 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking 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 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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:

- ensure that governors improve their effectiveness by making efficient use of externally moderated information about the school's performance to support and challenge school leaders successfully
- embed the recent changes you have made to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that the brisk pace of improvement is maintained.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the mathematics subject leader, members of the governing body, a representative of the diocese and

representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Together, we visited classrooms to observe learning in different year groups, talk to pupils about their learning and review work in pupils' workbooks. I had a discussion with a group of pupils. I spoke with some parents and carers at the start of the day. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, minutes of staff meetings and records of the external moderation of the school's performance. I examined the school's single central record of background checks on adults working in the school.

Context

Several changes have occurred since the last inspection. You are now the acting headteacher, following the departure of the previous postholder in December 2018. The early years leader is the acting deputy headteacher, covering your substantive post. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed for Year 3 and a new class teacher has been appointed in Year 1. One temporary teacher and one permanent teacher are covering the Year 2 class on a job-share basis while you are acting headteacher. There have also been changes to the governing body, with four new governors joining since March 2018, leaving one remaining vacancy still to be filled.

Main findings

Since your appointment in January 2019, the pace of change has hastened. You are bringing a renewed sense of urgency to the making of the required improvements. Your well-judged actions are successfully stabilising the school following a period of turbulence in leadership and staffing.

Leaders know the school well. Plans for improvement are appropriate because you and your senior team are clear about what success looks like. Leaders have a well-thought-through, structured approach to carrying out the changes needed. As a result, leaders' actions are successfully tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders are sensibly working to ensure that subject leaders' action plans align closely with the school development plan so that the pace of change is rapid. Leaders know that development planning needs to be equally ambitious for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now improving. Leaders are raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. You are bringing increased rigour to the monitoring of teaching and learning, and are using this information to provide precise and helpful feedback to staff. Minutes of staff meetings reflect the high aspirations for pupils' achievement and show that staff are being given clear guidance about what needs to improve. You have sensible plans in place to ensure that subject leaders begin monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas. This will ensure that they have the information they need to effectively lead developments in their subjects.

The assessment of what pupils know and can do is getting better. You spotted some inaccuracies in teachers' assessment for the last academic year and judiciously enlisted the support of the local authority to externally moderate the school's assessment information. Disappointingly, this revealed that several pupils were working below the levels that had previously been ascribed. You quickly responded and now all staff are trained appropriately in the accurate assessment of pupils' learning. A cycle of external moderation has been established and you are closely monitoring pupils' progress, carefully carrying out checks to ensure that assessment is now accurate. Pupils who were incorrectly assessed and now need extra help to catch up are receiving appropriate additional support. As a result, there are promising signs of pupils making strong progress, and leaders know this must be maintained.

The teaching of mathematics is becoming increasingly strong across the school. Pupils, including the most able pupils, now have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve challenging problems. Work seen in pupils' books shows many examples of pupils explaining their reasoning. However, sometimes, tasks are not planned precisely enough to meet pupils' learning needs, and this weakens their progress. At times, pupils do not have ready access to the resources they need to tackle tasks on their own, making them too reliant on adults' support.

The quality of pupils' writing is improving. Increasingly, pupils are given more opportunities to write at length and use a variety of styles and genres. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are becoming more confident in editing and self-correcting their work. Pupils are successfully improving the quality of their writing by using more complex sentence structures and a wider range of punctuation. Pupils' books are well presented and there are many examples of pupils making stronger progress because teaching approaches are being refined.

New governors have been recruited and have the relevant skills and experience to improve the effectiveness of the governing body. However, governors are not yet making sufficient use of externally moderated information and their own first-hand evidence to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. Although it is at an early stage, governors are making sensible changes to the way they work in order to sharpen their monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these developments.

External support

The local authority and the diocese are working together to provide effective support to school leaders. Staff training, provided by the local authority, has helped to sharpen teaching, learning and assessment. The local authority has enlisted the proficient expertise of a local headteacher, who is skilfully supporting school leaders to improve the school with haste. From April 2019, the Department for Education is also providing a national leader of education to assist the school's improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Prince
Her Majesty's Inspector