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Ms Manda George
Headteacher
Rye Oak Primary School
Whorlton Road
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SE15 3PD

Dear Ms George

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rye Oak Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- develop the skills of all middle leaders so they are able to evaluate the effectiveness of new strategies to raise pupils' achievement more quickly
- ensure the school's feedback policy is applied consistently across all classes
- provide opportunities for all pupils to be challenged across all areas of the curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, pupils from Key Stage 2, seven representatives from the governing body, including the Chair of Governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection.

I examined school improvement documents, records of the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding records and governing body minutes. I looked at pupils' current achievement data as well as published information. You accompanied me during visits to classes on both school sites, where we observed teaching from Nursery through to Year 6 and looked at pupils' work.

Context

Two nursery teachers and two learning support assistants have left the Early Years Foundation Stage. These posts are being covered by temporary staff. One teacher left the school in November, leaving a vacancy in Key Stage 2. This is being covered by a temporary teacher, supported by a senior leader.

Main findings

The clear and detailed improvement plan you have put in place is evaluated regularly to ensure actions are on track to secure rapid improvement. Recently appointed senior leaders regularly support teachers and teaching assistants to develop their practice and meet ambitious targets. This has led to more rapid improvements being made in recent times.

Middle leaders are new to the roles. Most have a good understanding of what is needed to move their areas of responsibility forwards and have improved policies and practices since the start of the academic year. Middle leaders responsible for English and mathematics are being supported by professionals from a neighbouring school. This is developing their skills so that they are able to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work more effectively.

There have been improvements in the quality of teaching. Clear expectations of what constitutes best practice have been put in place. Teachers are being supported with their planning on a weekly basis by senior leaders and expectations of what pupils can achieve are increasing. Planning documents focus teachers on challenging more able pupils and supporting lower ability pupils more effectively. However, this is not yet being seen in practice in all classes.

Teachers' feedback provides clearer targets to help pupils improve their work, particularly in English. Pupils are responding more regularly to the feedback they are

given and better progress can be seen in most pupils' books. This practice now needs to be applied consistently. Pupils' handwriting is starting to improve through the implementation of a new handwriting scheme. This needs applying in all classes. Pupils need more opportunities to practise longer pieces of writing to develop their skills further. They also need further opportunities to apply their number skills in different ways.

A review of the curriculum has taken place to ensure the school meets the new national expectations. Discussions with pupils reveal that many of them still do not feel sufficiently motivated and challenged by their learning. Leaders are aware of this and sessions are taking place to seek the views of pupils and what inspires them.

Very clear tracking systems are in place to show which pupils are not meeting the expectations for their age or are not making enough progress. Teachers use them effectively to set pupils focused targets for improvement. The progress of different groups of pupils is also analysed, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. The experienced inclusion leader has initiated better opportunities for professional development, particularly for support staff. As a result, pupils are being supported more effectively in class. According to the school's assessment information, most pupils are making more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Members of the governing body are challenging the school more effectively. Frequent training sessions take place which develop governors' skills and directly link to monitoring activities. These sessions are followed by classroom visits and are enabling governors to check on the impact of actions that have been implemented.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding took place in January 2015. All of the recommendations from the review have been actioned, apart from updating the school's website. This is planned in for the summer term and will ensure that better information about disadvantaged pupils is included. The school has appointed a teacher to be responsible for ensuring the needs of disadvantaged pupils are being met fully. There is also a governor who is specifically overseeing the progress of these pupils. The school tracks disadvantaged pupils separately and assessments show that these pupils are starting to make more rapid progress.

External support

The support provided by the local authority has been effective and has contributed to school improvements. At the end of the last academic year the local authority identified that the school required increased support and the school was linked with an outstanding school in the borough. Professionals from this school have supported

the literacy and numeracy leaders. Support has also been given to improve practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An external school consultant provides further support to the headteacher. These additional professionals are developing the skills of practitioners throughout the school and enabling improvements to me made more quickly.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southwark.

Yours sincerely

Mel Rose
Her Majesty's Inspector