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Mary Berkeley-Agyepong
Interim Headteacher
Winterbourne Nursery and Infants' School
Winterbourne Road
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Dear Mrs Berkeley-Agyepong

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Winterbourne Nursery and Infants' School

Following my visit to your school on 19 September 2018, 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:

- build on the current communication routes, improving communication between home and school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as the subject leaders for mathematics, literacy and the wider curriculum. I also met with representatives of the governing body, the local authority and senior leaders from another local school, who are providing training

and support, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan and self-evaluation documents were evaluated. Short visits were made to each class, jointly with senior leaders. Time was spent talking to pupils in lessons and reviewing learning in their books, from both the current and past academic years. Parents' views were considered as they arrived at the start of the school day. A discussion was held with a group of teaching staff. A range of documentation was scrutinised, for example the record of safeguarding checks made on adults and information on governance, the curriculum and pupils' achievement.

Context

The school's leadership has changed significantly since the last inspection. The substantive headteacher joined the school immediately after the school's inspection in September 2017. A new assistant headteacher joined the school in January 2018 and a substantive deputy headteacher completed the senior leadership team, joining in April 2018.

The local authority, successfully brokered your secondment as the interim headteacher, in April 2018, following the absence of the substantive headteacher. In addition, there have been several new appointments or changes to governance prior to your secondment. This has included the recruitment of some highly experienced governors, including a new chair, and two joint vice-chairs of the governing body. This has provided a fresh impetus for the operational running of the school.

An interim inclusion leader joined the team in September this year. This senior leader, seconded from your base school, is providing support for three days a week. This is ensuring leadership capacity, following the departure of the assistant headteacher, who went on maternity leave at the start of the term. There has been notable staff turnover this year. Many of the class teachers based in key stage 1 left at the end of the summer term. You have successfully filled all teaching vacancies with both permanent and agency staff.

Main findings

As a highly experienced, focused headteacher, you lead your senior teams well. You have ensured that both teams are clear about their roles. The deputy headteacher at Winterbourne, and the senior staff from your base school, have quickly demonstrated that they can make a difference to the quality of teaching. They provide training and support, monitoring carefully the quality of teaching. Together, they guide others as to how they can improve the progress that all groups of pupils are making. They have a very accurate idea of what needs to be done and where teaching needs to be strengthened. Action plans and pupils' recent achievements demonstrate how, collectively, you tackle areas identified for improvement. Consequently, since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching age expectations by the end of key stage 1. The

school's latest Year 2 results, externally moderated by the local authority, are now broadly in line with the available national comparisons, and above for writing. You and your senior leaders are well placed to secure further improvements, supporting the many new staff and middle leaders who have recently joined the school.

Since the last inspection, you and other leaders have shown determination to improve the consistency of teaching across key stage 1, to match the consistently good teaching in the early years. The governing body and newly appointed governors are working closely with senior leaders to check the progress of the school. The governing body now meets monthly. There are clearly agreed and understood priorities through the school's action plan, with appropriate timescales for each action. The school's action plans suitably address the areas identified as requiring improvement since the most recent inspection. Regular meetings and reviews are enabling governors to provide rapidly improving support and challenge to senior leaders. This approach is also helping governors to understand the existing strengths and the areas that need further support and development.

Governors are acutely aware that changes in the school have unsettled some parents and that parents may have mixed opinions of how well the school is managed. Leaders have taken time to review lines of communication to parents, including the regular attendance of representatives from the governing body at coffee mornings for parents. This improving communication is important to ensure that parents have a clear idea of what is happening in school. It is beginning to help parents understand why leaders are doing what they are doing, is engaging parents more fully in their children's learning and involvement in the school and is securing further improvements. However, communication with parents could be even better.

Staff are listened to and every effort is made in helping them improve their skills. They have been fully involved with reviewing and revising the school's latest action planning. Consequently, they are aware of, and action, what needs to be done to further improve the provision on offer. Staff take part in training and work closely with the girls' junior school, which is situated on the same site. A review of planning and the school's key stage 1 curriculum are leading to greater consistency and improvements in the quality of learning in classes. The implementation of the school's clear expectations regarding planning and assessment are supporting improvements in teaching and learning and identifying where intervention support needs to be actioned. However, the newly written, well-considered curriculum is in its infancy. Its full implementation across key stage 1 has just begun. It is therefore too soon to comment fully on this area identified for improvement.

Leaders' approach to checking the quality of teaching is thorough. Leaders' scrutiny of work for the previous academic year, including past and current pupils, correctly identifies that pupils have a better understanding of mathematics and literacy and are making stronger progress, and attainment is rising. In addition, planned interventions and support are now ensuring that standards are improving. For example, in-school gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged

peers are closing and there has been a decrease in persistent absence rates since September 2017.

External support

The school is very well supported by the local authority, who have undertaken a full financial audit and brokered external support in a range of services. Local authority officers have provided continued challenge and support for the school. They are supporting through observing pupils' behaviour and learning in lessons and reviewing pupils' learning and progress during termly progress review meetings. The local authority has moderated the school's judgements in their end of year, statutory assessments at each key stage. This support has helped confirm the school's progress towards becoming a good school in all areas. In addition to this support, the school is benefiting from the excellent links made with your base school, a 'good' school with 'outstanding' leadership and management. Your senior leaders have worked effectively with staff and middle leaders to improve teaching and the accuracy of assessment in writing and mathematics in key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector