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9 February 2016

Mrs Deborah Howard
Headteacher
Oswald Road Primary School
Oswald Road
Chorlton
Manchester
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Dear Mrs Howard

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Oswald Road Primary School

Following my visit with Joanne Olsson, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 26 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, and aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school, including the contribution the school makes to pupils' well-being.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you, other senior leaders and members of staff, groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and a number of parents at the start of the school day. I spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body by telephone and met with a representative of the local authority. We visited classrooms to see pupils at work and observed breaks and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised other documentation linked to inclusion and communications with parents.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet requirements.

The school has strong and well-embedded procedures for all aspects of safeguarding. Its safeguarding policy has been reviewed and meets requirements. Effective training in safeguarding and first aid has allowed staff to support children and adults in difficult circumstances. Teachers are vigilant in undertaking their duties to protect pupils from the threats posed by radicalisation and extremism. Pupils spoken with during the inspection say that they feel safe in school. They are able to articulate how to keep safe in the wider community, including while they are online, because of the teaching they have received. The school makes effective use of social media to keep parents up to date with any particular concerns or threats. For example, a recent online safety issue regarding passwords for a popular application was shared quickly using the school's social media; this was followed up by teaching that ensured that pupils knew how to protect themselves from any online threat.

Context

Oswald Road is a larger than average primary school. Although the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.

You and the governors hold a shared vision to provide the best education for pupils. You recognise, however, that in the past you have not always met parents' expectations regarding consulting with them or sharing the senior leaders' high expectations for the school. Leaders have learnt from their mistakes and taken effective actions to improve relationships with parents but also recognise that further work needs to be done. Governors, looking for ways to improve their practice, engaged a national leader of governance to undertake a review of governance in summer 2015. The review's findings were shared with parents and appropriate actions put in place to address the areas of need. These actions include enhancing governor training and improving further how the governing body handles complaints. As a result, the governing body is finalising, in consultation with parents and staff, a new, more up-to-date complaints policy that follows current national guidance. Governors have ensured that a fair and open recruitment system is operated by the school. For significant leadership positions, the governing body seeks the advice of the local authority and undertakes a more prolonged selection process to ensure that they appoint the right person for the job.

You have sought feedback from parents about all aspects of the school using a comprehensive questionnaire. Your analysis of the results indicates that the majority of parents are positive about the school, though a small number remain dissatisfied. This corresponded to views expressed by the sample of parents we met at the start of the day. As a result of this feedback, you have taken positive actions to foster better relationships and address the concerns that have been raised. Parents now have better opportunities to engage with school to present their viewpoints on proposed actions. Parental focus groups allow parents to evaluate and comment on specific proposals that may impact on their children's education and well-being. Currently, one focus group is looking at the new home-school agreement to ensure that it reflects both the needs of both the school and parents and particularly how it best ensures that the school is held to account for its commitments under the agreement. Parent Forum meetings share information with parents about new initiatives in school. At a recent forum meeting, your staff explained the new assessment procedures used by the school following the removal of National Curriculum levels, while another meeting focused on the teaching of mathematics in school. Additionally, 'listening events' give parents opportunities to discuss openly with leaders particular themes such as communication. Parents are better and more regularly informed about the life of school because the frequency of school newsletters has increased. Furthermore, these newsletters now contain a section, 'You said: We did', demonstrating your actions to respond and address any issues or requests raised by parents.

You have high expectations and are not afraid to take robust actions when these are necessary to ensure that pupils receive the teaching they deserve. Your staff feel that you lead the school well and they enjoy working at Oswald Road because they feel part of the staff team. Teachers speak positively of the support that they receive from senior leaders, including you, and rate highly the professional development provided for them.

You, your staff team and the governors continue to ensure that the school is an inclusive one. All pupils have fair access to the curriculum and school activities. For example, interviews for the positions of house captains were open to all older pupils and appropriate arrangements were made to support pupils who were disabled or who have special educational needs so that they were able to participate successfully. Pupil premium funding is appropriately used to support those pupils who are disadvantaged. The use of detailed pastoral support plans means that pupils who may have difficulties in participating in some activities have access to appropriate support to allow them do so. You remain committed to the principles of 'flexi-schooling', to allow children to benefit from partial home schooling but also recognise the need for the school to remain within the law. Consequently, you have sought advice from the local authority, particularly to ensure that absences are correctly recorded in registers, and have included these procedures in a new flexi-schooling policy that follows national guidance.

The pupils who we spoke with during the inspection are proud of their school. They are jubilant about new developments to the playground such as the freshly laid synthetic grass. Pupils also demonstrate this pride in the high-quality work that they

produce and the care that they take in keeping their school environment clean and tidy. Good relationships seen between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' positive achievement. Pupils' relationships with each other are positive and reflect the ethos of the school, which is rooted firmly in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nearly all the parents spoken to during the monitoring inspection share the pupils' pride in the school and recognise how the school helps their children achieve well. Pupils' overall conduct and learning behaviour around the school are of a high standard. However, during unstructured times such as lunchtime, staff do not always take the lead in talking with pupils or initiating activities. Consequently, a small number of pupils sometimes let the side down with their conduct. Leaders are aware of where improvements are needed and a new behaviour policy is being implemented.

The provision for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is strong because the special educational needs coordinator has a secure understanding of current requirements and is working effectively to enhance the provision for pupils. This has required the adaption of some established processes, including the involvement of more staff and experts in meetings. Some parents have found this new way of working challenging. Meticulously kept records and effective planning ensures that pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum by skilled teaching assistants who foster trusting and respectful relationships.

External support

The school has drawn effectively on support from the local authority, which has brought about improvements in governance and leadership. Advice from the local authority has also confirmed that the school is meeting its statutory obligations with regard to the recording of absence.

Priorities for further improvement

- Enhance further the relationships with parents by continuing to embed and build upon current work to share information, seek viewpoints and listen to worries or concerns.
- Enhance further the well-being of pupils by improving the standards of behaviour, particularly at unstructured times of the day, by ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained and consistently implement the school's new behaviour policy.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Nixon
Her Majesty's Inspector