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25 September 2014

Miss A Crawley
Headteacher
Sutton Park Community Primary School
Greatfield Road
Kidderminster
DY11 6PH

Dear Miss Crawley

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Sutton Park Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the school.

Evidence

I considered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

You were appointed as headteacher in September 2014.

Sutton Park Primary is a smaller than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils that are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local

authority) is broadly average. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average, but is above average for those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since the previous inspection in November 2012 the behaviour of pupils has declined. This is mainly as a result of the school's previous weak management of a small number of pupils who regularly display very challenging behaviour which has a negative impact on their own learning and the behaviour and learning of others. A number of pupils, parents and staff expressed a sense of frustration that this behaviour has continued for an extended period of time. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2014 you have quickly gained an accurate view of this situation and have made it a priority for improvement. It is too soon to accurately measure any improvement made, however parents, staff and pupils agree that you have already begun to make a difference. One pupil told me that 'our new headteacher is strict – when she says something – she means it.' The parents who spoke to me agree with this view and feel confident that if they raise a concern it is listened to and acted upon.

Rightly, you have included the behaviour of pupils as a priority in the school improvement plan. You and the deputy headteacher have identified some appropriate actions that need to be taken. However the plan is not detailed enough. In particular, it does not include information about how leaders and governors will check or measure if the actions have been successful.

In the past pupils have walked out of lessons too often and there has not been a clear procedure in place to manage their behaviour. While some pupils still do this, they are now clear that there are consequences to their actions and are beginning to think more carefully about making the decision to leave the classroom. Leaders do not keep precise enough records about this type of behaviour to be able to show whether this situation is improving.

There is a system in place for recording incidences of poor behaviour but it is not used consistently by all staff. As a result leaders do not have a full record of any challenging or negative behaviour that occurs. Equally, the incidents that are recorded are not analysed to check for trends or patterns. Consequently leaders cannot check if the support that they provide for pupils is making a difference.

There is a consistent approach to managing behaviour across the school. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions associated with the 'zone boards.' Most pupils respond well to this approach and are keen to behave well. Pupils whose behaviour is more challenging have individual behaviour contracts, often involving a sticker chart. The pupils who spoke to me understood fully that they needed to improve their behaviour and how the chart worked. They also acknowledge that the adults in school are trying to help them. However, pupils could not explain how or if they were learning new strategies to help them to make better choices about their behaviour. A number of staff members are currently being trained on a new intervention programme called THRIVE which is designed to do precisely this however the training is not yet completed. School records show that where exclusion of pupils occurs it is proportionate and is used only as a last resort.

During the inspection I observed the majority of pupils moving around the corridors and classrooms calmly and sensibly. Most pupils behave sensibly and safely on the stairs. Pupils were polite and friendly and keen to talk to me. Pupils held doors open for adults and their classmates without being asked. Levels of staff supervision are high and pupils respond to their reminders quickly. However, some older pupils do not yet have the self-discipline to behave to the same high standard when they are not in the sight of an adult.

Most classrooms were calm and purposeful during the inspection. Pupils were responsive to the teacher and demonstrated positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils in Reception class had settled well into school and were demonstrating a good awareness of how to behave well. Pupils' behaviour was best when learning was moving along at a good pace and was set at the right level of difficulty. On occasion, most noticeably in Year 4, the pupils had less positive attitudes to learning. There was no sense of urgency about the learning, some pupils were talking when the teacher was talking and were lounging lazily in their chairs. I also observed a number of pupils leave the classroom. However these pupils followed the newly introduced rule of sitting quietly to calm down and then returning to their learning.

Playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised by adults. Pupils explained that they feel safe in the playground and if any issues arise they feel confident that adults will listen and take appropriate action. Pupils told me that there are incidents of fighting and swearing in the playground involving a small number of pupils in Key Stage 2. They confirmed that staff act quickly and appropriately on these occasions but they expressed frustration that 'it keeps happening and has been going on a long time.' Pupils reported that bullying in the school was rare but when it occurred it was dealt with very seriously. Lunchtime supervisors stated that most pupils behave well in the playground but that a core of pupils caused regular disruption. They reported that they would benefit from some additional training on dealing with challenging behaviour.

In the dining hall the younger children eat together sensibly and calmly. Most of the older children also behave well, queuing patiently for their food and moving around the hall sensibly. Occasionally during my observations, the Key Stage 2 pupils were a little boisterous and over excited when they were eating and noise levels became quite high. The lunchtime staff confirmed that the behaviour I observed was typical and that generally pupils were polite and behaved well, listening to their instructions and acting on them.

Since the last inspection pupils' attendance has declined. The school's records indicate that overall attendance for 2013/4 was 93.7%, which places Sutton Primary in the bottom 10% of schools in the country for attendance. Attendance for pupils who are eligible for pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs is lower still. Staff are very knowledgeable about individual families whose attendance is poor and there are systems in place to ensure that pupils and their families understand the importance of regular attendance. Pupils receive certificates and other rewards for meeting and exceeding the attendance target. Leaders are working appropriately with external agencies and the local secondary school to improve attendance levels. However, leaders do not analyse overall and groups' attendance regularly enough to see if their actions are making a difference and are not swift enough to use penalty notices where absence remains persistent.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the rates of attendance for all groups of pupils so that they are at least in line with the national average.
- Ensure that the school's behaviour and bullying records are analysed regularly to check for trends or patterns and to identify which strategies for improving behaviour have been successful.
- Provide pupils who regularly display challenging behaviour with opportunities to develop strategies that can be used to help them make better choices about their actions.
- Ensure that adults in all classes have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, including sitting smartly ready to learn and listening when adults are speaking.
- Enable older pupils to develop a sense of self-discipline so that they can regulate their behaviour when they are not being directly supervised by an adult.
- Provide lunchtime supervisory staff with additional training on managing behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Howie
Her Majesty's Inspector