

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



26 September 2016

Lynn Boulton
Timothy Hackworth Primary School
Byerley Road
Shildon
County Durham
DL4 1HN

Dear Mrs Boulton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Timothy Hackworth Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 September 2016, 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 2015. 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- work with parents to tackle pupils' poor attendance with increased rigour
- improve pupils' skills in reading in upper key stage 2
- deploy teaching assistants more effectively in lessons.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated, together with a range of documents including minutes of meetings of the

governing body and the local authority's school scrutiny group. Information about pupils' attendance and persistent absence was examined. You accompanied me on a learning walk through classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Context

The vice-chair of the governing body resigned after the section 5 inspection and the role was taken on by an existing governor. Four teachers left the school at the end of the summer term. One teaching vacancy has not yet been filled by a substantive post-holder.

Main findings

The headteacher has a very secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and has led the actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders are playing an increasingly important role in school improvement. Their skills in evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are much improved since the section 5 inspection in November 2015.

The school's action plan clearly outlines the aspects of the school's work which require further development and the milestones by which improvement will be measured. Leaders review progress fortnightly and make amendments to the plan when necessary.

Governors are supportive of the headteacher, the staff and the pupils. Their skills are improving following attendance at training provided by the local authority. Governors are beginning to challenge the headteacher and senior leaders more robustly.

School staff have worked in partnership with parents to improve the attendance of those pupils who were persistently absent. However, pupils' attendance overall has failed to improve. In response, the school (in partnership with three other local primary schools) has employed its own educational welfare officer.

A review of the school's policy and procedures for teaching phonics has proved beneficial. Although standards have not yet reached national levels, the proportion of pupils who achieved the standard in the check of phonics skills in Year 1 increased by almost a third between 2015 and 2016. The policy and procedures for the teaching of reading have also been reviewed. Three quarters of children at the end of the early years reached the standard typical for their age this year, compared with half of children in 2015. Pupils are also making much better progress in reading in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Leaders have ambitious plans to work in close partnership with parents to enable the older pupils to develop age-appropriate reading skills more quickly so that they are ready for the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum on transfer to Year 7.

The teaching of mathematics has a higher priority in school. Pupils confirm that they are given more opportunities to use their basic mathematical skills to solve real-life mathematical problems and carry out investigations. Pupils enjoy this work but understand that they need to know basic number facts thoroughly.

Although the quality of teaching is much improved, there is still variability across the school. This is also true of the work of the school's teaching assistant workforce. Some teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in guiding pupils' learning. There is a full training programme to develop the skills of both teachers and teaching assistants and the appraisal of performance is more embedded since the inspection.

Leaders have acted on all of the recommendations made in the review of pupil premium spending which took place in March 2016. Disadvantaged pupils (those entitled to support through the government's pupil premium funding) are making better progress and more are reaching the standards that are expected for their age.

External support

The local authority adviser linked to the school provides effective support and has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are well supported by the local authority through the provision of training and joint activities to monitor the progress made by pupils in their subjects. The local authority has committed continued support and advice in response to some turbulence in the leadership of the early years. Regular meetings of the local authority's school scrutiny group ensure that leaders are challenged rigorously.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector