

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 October 2016

Miss Gillian Houghton
Abraham Moss Community School
Crescent Road
Crumpsall
Manchester
M8 5UF

Dear Miss Houghton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abraham Moss Community School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 December 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in December 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior leadership team, other senior and middle leaders and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I met with a governor and had telephone conversations with the interim chair of the governing body and one other governor. I met with two groups of pupils and spoke to others during visits to lessons. I evaluated your action plans and reviewed various documents, including your self-evaluation, your new assessment system, records of monitoring and the school's latest performance data. I considered information about the progress being made

by pupils and reviewed some of their work. I made brief visits to classes at each key stage, where I observed pupils learning. I read information in the school's website.

Context

Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured and strengthened with new appointments from within and to the school. The interim chair of governors has completed his term and a new chair is being elected at the next governing body meeting. A number of new staff have joined the school. Twenty-three teachers have joined the secondary phase and a similar number have left. Subject departments are in the process of reorganisation. Staff responsibilities have been reorganised and a number of teaching assistants have been appointed in the primary phase. The number of pupils on roll has increased as new classes join the primary phase, which now has classes from Nursery to Year 6.

Main findings

You have built on the strengths that were reported in the last inspection and are continuing to drive improvement at a rapid pace across all aspects of the school's work. Your accurate self-evaluation is based on detailed analysis of the school's performance. The school development plan identifies the most important priorities for further improvement, including those identified at the last inspection. Under your purposeful direction, actions taken to date are proving successful in improving teaching and raising the rates of pupils' progress. The effective delegated leadership arrangements enable leaders at all levels to promote improvement in their areas of responsibility. They share your vision and drive to create an inclusive, harmonious community where pupils thrive and achieve to the best of their ability.

The culture of the school continues to improve. There is little disruption in lessons. Pupils say they are rarely distracted from their learning now because teaching is better and the behaviour policy is applied consistently. The strengths that were reported in the last inspection in the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continue. There is a nurturing atmosphere where pupils' diverse backgrounds are respected and celebrated by all in the culturally vibrant school community. Pupils across the whole school feel safe and well looked after because their personal needs and welfare are high priorities for all staff. Vulnerable pupils, international new arrivals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to receive highly effective specialist support. Staff morale is now much higher after a period of some turbulence, adding to the harmonious and cohesive atmosphere. Staff are moving in the same direction and share the higher expectations and ambition for pupils exemplified by leaders.

Better teaching, accurate assessment and effective curriculum planning is increasing pupils' rates of progress in each key stage. Attendance has also improved as a result of successful strategies to ensure that pupils get to school, and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Registers are checked at the start of each

day and pastoral staff follow up absence immediately with a telephone call or home visit. The 'all-through' assessment system, which has just been introduced, uses the best practice from the primary phase within the school. It is not yet used fully in the secondary phase, but staff have welcomed the new approach.

The head of transition is working closely with partner primary schools to ensure that pupils from those schools build on their prior learning effectively from the start of Year 7. Your more focused approach to assessing needs is ensuring that pupils who join the secondary phase part-way through, including those who speak English as an additional language, receive appropriate support to fill gaps in their learning and develop their literacy and language skills. Your pupil progress tracking and work in pupils' books show that pupils' progress from starting points has continued to quicken, and there are increasing proportions of pupils working at the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics in Years 8 and 9. Pupils' books are well presented, reflecting the higher expectations of teachers and increased pride pupils take in their work.

In 2016 you celebrated your best ever GCSE results. The proportion of pupils who achieved five or more good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics rose substantially to 58%. Many pupils made rapid progress and achieved higher grades than those predicted in several subjects, given their prior attainment.

The last inspection reported that teaching in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 is consistently good, resulting in pupils making good progress from relatively low starting points. The primary phase leader has ensured that the improvements continue and expectations remain high. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development increased again in 2016, as did the proportion reaching expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening.

Teaching is improving in the secondary phase, due to good-quality professional development, effective management of teachers' performance and increased accountability at all levels. Inconsistencies in mathematics teaching are being dealt with. New mathematics teachers have brought new skills and leaders are supporting teachers across the department more effectively, to develop their practice. In lessons in all subjects, teachers were skilful in asking questions that deepened pupils' understanding, reflecting the training and sharing of best practice that had taken place. Pupils said that teachers' expectations of them are higher and they welcome this change. The atmosphere in lessons is conducive to learning. Pupils are attentive and responsive.

Your focus on the development of pupils' literacy skills in teachers' performance management targets ensures that it remains a high priority in all subjects. You are making good use of the expertise in school, for example, from teachers of English as an additional language and from the primary phase. The focus on literacy skills in tutor groups and teaching groups supports pupils who need more help to develop their literacy skills systematically. Pupils know their learning targets in all subjects

and find teachers' feedback helpful. The work in pupils' books was extremely well presented and marked effectively. Pupils of all ability said work usually provides them with enough challenge and they are encouraged to develop their interests and talents. There is some amazing art and design work that confirms this.

Leadership and management have been developed further and strengthened at all levels. The cross-phase senior leadership team maintains a strategic overview and ensures that best practice is shared across the school. The reorganisation of departmental leadership in the secondary phase has been carefully thought through to make the best use of expertise in the school. The shared leadership in mathematics, for example, is enabling leaders to focus on different aspects and support new staff effectively. The creation of a humanities faculty facilitates the sharing of good practice across subjects.

You have improved the approach to monitoring teaching in order to assess the impact teaching has on learning over time. Leaders across the school are now considering test or examination results, pupils' progress from starting points and the standard of work seen in pupils' books as well as observing teaching. Teachers' performance management targets are based on the findings and linked closely to whole-school improvement priorities. These changes are enabling leaders to accurately evaluate the work of those for whom they are responsible and act more quickly to secure improvements.

Governors' knowledge and skills have been enhanced considerably in the last year with training and coaching from the interim chair and the appointment of new governors. They have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and carry out their responsibilities with increasing rigour. They are rightly ensuring that capacity is built at all levels in the school.

You have built better capacity to sustain improvement across the school since the last inspection. The strong and purposeful leadership from you, as headteacher, and from senior leaders is now backed up by more effective leadership at every level. The reorganised leadership structure and improved systems to check pupils' progress and evaluate teachers' performance ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and accountable for pupils' outcomes. Pupils' progress is increasing in every year group, providing the foundations to ensure that improvements in pupils' attainment seen at the end of key stages this year continue into the future.

External support

The local authority has judiciously reduced support to the school over the last year, as capacity is building within. Since the last inspection, the main support from the local authority has been to provide an interim chair of governors to strengthen the governing body and coach members to take over the role. You have used the good practice within school to lead improvements and are doing so successfully.

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

Jean Olsson-Law
Her Majesty's Inspector