

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 October 2017

Mrs Zowie Norris
West Melton Junior and Infant School
Stokewell Road
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 6NF

Dear Mrs Norris

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Melton Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 2017, 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 September 2016. 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 for the school to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. Meetings were held with the local authority school improvement partner and a member of the Wickersley Partnership Trust. A telephone call took place with the chair, and vice-chair, of the governing body. I spoke with a representative from the local authority. Pupils' views were obtained in lessons and at lunchtime.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes of staff. Three teachers have left the school. Two newly qualified teachers have left, and the teachers for whom they were providing maternity cover have returned. There is a new chair of the governing body and some turnover in membership of the governing body.

Leaders are intending to join the Wickersley Partnership Trust as a convertor academy.

Main findings

Because of a more stable staff, the quality of teaching is improving. You have provided staff with many training opportunities to develop handwriting, phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and mathematics teaching, for example. In addition, you have introduced a 'non-negotiable' list to teachers to ensure clarity in expectations of staff. The list makes clear to staff your expectations of how certain aspects of their roles should be carried out to a high standard, and includes direction on planning lessons, marking and feedback to pupils, and the promotion of pupils' positive behaviour.

However, some pockets of inconsistent teaching remain. In some classes, expectations of what the most and least able pupils will do are not high enough and resources provided are not suitable to underpin pupils' understanding sufficiently. You, and your deputy headteacher, are aware of where this is happening and are providing appropriate support and challenge to staff to enable pupils to make better progress.

You have ensured that additional adults join teachers in training events to help develop a consistent approach to teaching. Despite this, the support provided by additional adults remains varied and their effect is dependent upon the tasks they are given by teachers. That said, some additional adults are providing effective teaching to pupils in small groups, including the most and least able pupils.

The quality of pupils' written work and presentation is improving, particularly in Year 2 and key stage 2. However, inconsistencies remain in the quality of pupils' written work across key stage 1. As a result of less rigorous teaching in early years and key stage 1 in the past, some less able boys in particular are struggling to hold their pencils and form their letters and numbers correctly. More rigour in teaching in key stage 2 is leading to greater consistency in the way pupils present their work.

You, and your staff, have introduced a school-wide system to address the inconsistency in the teaching of phonics and early writing. There are early signs of improvement in pupils' ability to use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words but some lower-ability pupils still lack confidence and require considerable

support to write. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the Year 1 phonics check improved by 15% between 2016 and 2017 and is now broadly in line with national figures.

You, and your deputy headteacher, have introduced new systems so that you can track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is enabling you to set challenging targets for pupils and to ensure that individuals make the progress they should. Your analysis of the progress of individual pupils has enabled you to put into place additional teaching to help plug gaps in pupils' understanding in English and mathematics. You have reorganised the school day to allow more time for the teaching of basic skills. Your deputy headteacher has revised the way reading is taught in key stage 1, leading to pupils' more rapid progress.

You are analysing the progress of groups of pupils at the end of key stages but have not used this information to understand the progress of disadvantaged pupils, or boys and girls. You know that at the end of key stages, significant differences remain between the progress of different groups, but you are less clear about the progress of groups from year to year.

Overall, leaders and teachers have had a positive influence on pupils' attainment and progress in 2017. Three quarters of children left Reception class with a good level of development. Although the proportion was the same in 2016, this represents improved progress for this group of children, who started school at lower starting points.

Provisional assessment information shows that pupils have achieved better outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 in 2017. At the end of key stage 1, 67% of pupils attained the expected standard in reading and mathematics, and 59% did so in writing. This represents an improvement from 2016 but is still below national averages. At the end of key stage 2, 55% of pupils attained expected levels in reading and 60% in writing and mathematics. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year. However, only 45% of pupils left the school with expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This figure is well below the national average.

Disadvantaged pupils did far less well than other pupils when compared to national figures, and boys outperformed girls at both key stages 1 and 2.

You, and your governors, have made sure that safeguarding is effective. Checks on the suitability of staff and visitors are thorough and paperwork is compliant. You have ensured that staff training, policies and procedures are up to date.

You have introduced incentives and rewards for pupils who attend school regularly and on time. Despite this, overall attendance did not improve in 2017 and remains below national figures. The attendance officer is working with a third of families to try to help pupils attend school regularly, but persistent absence is high.

External support

The local authority has been focused and effective in their support to the school. They have undertaken reviews of the effectiveness of teaching of English and mathematics and have made recommendations that you and your leaders have been quick to implement. Teachers have attended moderation meetings with local schools so that you are assured of the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' skills.

The local authority has brokered a review of governance. This review has helped governors to iron out some confusion regarding their roles and responsibilities: governors now have a detailed plan that will guide them as they continue to improve their effectiveness.

Wickersley Partnership Trust has provided substantial support since its involvement with the school. It has undertaken a review of teaching and learning and trust representatives have accompanied you on regular 'enquiry walks' around the school so that you and your leaders have a clearer picture about where improvements are needed. It has set up pupil progress meetings in Years 2 and 6 and supported you with setting of targets for all pupils' progress. Teachers have begun working with specialists from the trust to improve teaching in Spanish and music. Teachers worked effectively with teachers from across the trust and with the local authority to ensure that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector