

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 January 2018

Dr Jo Saxton
Chief Executive Officer
Martello Primary School
Warren Way
Folkestone
Kent
CT19 6DT

Dear Dr Saxton

No formal designation inspection of Martello Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 December 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning.

Evidence

The inspector scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the chief executive officer (CEO), the executive headteacher, the head of school, the chair and parent governors of the local governing body, and advisory staff from the trust.

The inspector looked at documentation, including curriculum planning, timetables, attendance records and pupils' books. The inspector heard children read, and talked to children about their work and life at school.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

This is a small school, with 147 pupils. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils leave and join the school at various times during the school year. Since September, over 20 pupils have joined the school. A higher-than-average proportion of children are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. A much-larger-than-average proportion of pupils are supported by pupil premium funding. The school is funded to take pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) with a statement of special educational needs, or who have an education, health and care plan for autism. In addition, the school provides for an average proportion of pupils who are on the register of SEN as requiring support.

This inspection was carried out because of concerns raised by an informal unreported visit to the school by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI). At that time, the head of school appeared uncertain how to tackle some of the classroom behaviour-management issues in the school following a change of sponsor from Lilac Sky to the Turner Schools in January 2017. The new sponsor has had complex legacy issues to resolve since taking over from Lilac Sky, which included completion of and moving to a new building. As the school is new, it has not yet received a section 5 inspection (a full two-day inspection).

The quality of leadership in relation to behaviour and welfare of the pupils

Leaders and managers have successfully addressed the most serious concerns relating to the management of lessons, and pupils' welfare and behaviour, identified at the previous visit to the school. The CEO and executive headteacher, supported by the head of school, have implemented clear expectations of what is acceptable behaviour, which pupils understand and follow. Staff report that, if they have problems with individual pupils during lessons, senior leaders respond and deal with the issues rapidly. This has led to much calmer classroom environments, where lessons are more purposeful and disruptions to learning have been reduced.

The appointment of a teaching assistant to support pupils to improve their behaviour and a family liaison officer to improve attendance is having a positive impact. Teachers use more effective techniques to manage the behaviour of those pupils who find it difficult to control their emotions. Pupils agree that there are fewer interruptions during lessons now. For example, in the Reception class, the teacher started the day by introducing a movement game that ensured children quickly responded to instructions. As a result, children were attentive and responsive during their phonics lesson. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, all pupils were seen keenly working cooperatively to solve problems and develop their mathematical understanding.

Not enough focus is given to evaluating pupils' attendance patterns over time, so the school is unable to fully judge the level of improvement in attendance.

During lunchtimes, pupils talk freely to staff about their lessons and the activities they enjoy both in and out of school. Pupils are appreciative of the healthy and appetising school meals, with many recommending the 'roast meal' in particular. Pupils were seen confidently chatting to the CEO of the trust while they ate lunch together. The CEO listened carefully, and demonstrated an excellent understanding of the different issues facing the pupils the school serves.

The leadership of the quality of teaching and learning

School leaders and staff are raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Although not all teachers are familiar enough with some of the new subject knowledge needed for lessons, the high expectations of the trust are clear. Pupils were keen to tell HMI about what they were learning in art, history and geography. They are starting to take pride in their work, and their academic progress was clear to see in their workbooks. However, school leaders lack day-to-day knowledge of what is being taught across the curriculum and the progress that pupils are making.

The teaching of reading in key stage 1 is improving. A phonics programme is being followed and this led to improved results in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2017. However, currently, there is a lack of attention given to providing training to improve the knowledge and skills of staff who are less familiar with teaching the programme. In some lessons, staff were not confident enough in their own knowledge to assess what the children knew and needed to learn next. This resulted in some pupils not making rapid enough progress and others not being identified as needing extra practice. The leader of reading does not regularly monitor the quality of phonics teaching across the school and relies on information provided by external trainers.

Pupils focus well in their mathematics lessons. They are enthusiastic about using their times tables to work out number problems and are gaining an improving level of knowledge. Teachers are clear about how much needs to be done to support some children to catch up, particularly those who have just joined the school.

The capacity of leadership at all levels

Leaders at all levels demonstrate their desire to improve the school, and their confidence in the trust and governing body has increased. The CEO is making good use of the knowledge and understanding of the local governing body to improve aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. Leaders draw on the expertise from within the trust to introduce a new curriculum and ways of working. Together, they are having a positive impact on increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, improvement is hindered by the lack of confidence within the school leadership team to take responsibility for driving improvement. In addition, staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting have slowed improvement. However, new staff have now been appointed to fill vacancies, and parents say confidence in the school is increasing, as demonstrated by the increase in pupil numbers. The CEO

has a clear vision, shared by governors, of where she wants the school to be, and she is ambitious for the success of children being educated at Martello.

External support

The school is currently relying on high levels of external support to develop the teaching of early reading. The CEO recognises this and has plans to ensure that the leadership within the school takes a greater role in driving improvement. In addition, the advisory staff from the trust have played a key role in the design of the new curriculum, working well with school staff to increase their confidence and knowledge of new aspects to be studied. The head of school is currently supported by a part-time executive principal. This is helping the head of school to focus on what needs to improve most, and both she and the part-time executive principal are more confident in leading the school than at the time of the previous visit.

Priorities for further improvement

- Provide opportunities for the leader of reading to monitor and evaluate the quality of phonics teaching regularly across all groups.
- Ensure that the school is clear about what staff are doing to improve the quality of teaching reading.
- Analyse attendance data more thoroughly in order to know the impact of the new behaviour policies that have been introduced.
- Ensure that school leaders increase their knowledge and oversight of the curriculum and how it is implemented in order to better support staff to improve the quality of their lessons.

I am copying this letter to the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector