

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566 937

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jsimmons@cfbt.com



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Mrs J Vickers
Headteacher
Norfolk Park School
Park Grange Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 3QF

Dear Mrs Vickers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Norfolk Park School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 13 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- Strengthen leadership by ensuring that responsibility and accountability assigned to each leadership role is clear, and leaders prioritise their work to reflect the schools immediate needs.
- Ensure that all leaders have appropriate time to undertake their roles and frequent checks on the school's work result in sharply focused points for action to drive improvement.
- Ensure that school improvement plans make clear the impact that actions are intended to have on improving pupil outcomes.

- Ensure that senior leaders provide detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning to assist governors in exercising their responsibilities in evaluating the school's work and progress.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A range of school documentation was scrutinised including the outcomes of monitoring activities, the impact of performance management, information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Context

The deputy headteacher is absent from school due to illness. One teacher has left and a temporary teacher is teaching the class. One teacher is absent on family leave and a senior leader has stepped down from her leadership role to teach the class. A new Chair of the Governing Body took up the role in September 2013. The number of pupils on roll has reduced to 72 since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Staffing absence, particularly at senior leadership level, has contributed to slow progress since the last monitoring inspection. As leaders have struggled with increasing workloads checks on the school's work have not taken place as often or to the depth needed to drive improvement. For example, checks on teaching are not rigorous or frequent enough to check whether points for improvement have been acted upon. Training to support middle leaders has not been focused enough to enable them to quickly get to grips with the expectation of their roles. Further direction, for example about the frequency of checks and insights they are expected to provide in order to develop provision and improve outcomes for pupils is at very early stages. Plans are behind schedule. Staff with responsibilities for literacy and numeracy are beginning to share their expertise to assist colleagues in using specialist resources and in planning lessons.

While staffing difficulties have hampered the pace of change, teaching is slowly (?) starting to improve. Teachers are starting to make better use of pupils' targets when planning lessons. Adults working with pupils know the goals that pupils are working towards over time and what is expected of them during the lesson. Classroom displays and charts of pupils' targets make this clear to all who are supporting individual pupils. Pupils are interested in lessons and their behaviour is improving in response to a more varied and greater range of resources. Most staff are beginning to use these resources in lessons to enable pupils to demonstrate what they know. For example, in a mathematics session pupils were supported well to use instruments to answer questions about counting and to join in rhymes. Occasionally,

pupils' progress slowed when responses they made were not noticed or acted upon quickly by teachers or support staff.

Leaders have more information and knowledge of pupils' achievement. Accuracy in assessing pupils' attainment and progress is improving. Staff are responding to training: the use of other schools to check the accuracy and pitch of their judgements is developing staff confidence and expertise. Most pupils are on track to achieve their attainment targets and the school are beginning to use new systems to examine the reasons for differences in progress between groups of pupils.

Recommendations given by HMI following the previous inspection have not been successfully addressed. Revised improvement plans do not make clear enough the impact that actions are expected to have. Milestones introduced to school plans since the last monitoring inspection in May, are not helpful as they refer mostly to the completion of tasks rather than their impact on improving the school's effectiveness. A lack of detailed information about the quality of the school's work, particularly about teaching and its impact on learning has not been challenged sufficiently by the governing body or the local authority. In discussion during this inspection, governors recognised that the weaknesses in planning and information did not help them to exercise their role fully to check that plans are being implemented successfully or to challenge effectively. The addition of experienced governors is enabling the governing body to begin to act on staffing and financial matters and to challenge the headteacher about how middle leadership can be developed. Governors specialist expertise is beginning to be harnessed, for example, work is starting to examine why some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not making as much progress as others. However, the school has not acted to ensure that all governors are completing the necessary training.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has recently begun to act more swiftly to hold the school to account and sharper monitoring is identifying where further support and challenge is required. Experienced governors are beginning to help the governing body to focus on the areas that they urgently need to tackle. However, further exemplification of good and outstanding governance is required to overcome the lack of training about how governors should exercise their responsibilities. Investment and support from the local authority in the summer has helped the school to develop the computer infrastructure to develop new tracking systems. Norfolk Park School has drawn upon the support of several schools. These links have contributed to developments in

teaching and assessment but action to improve leadership has not had the impact anticipated.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield and as below.

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector