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3 December 2014

Mrs Claire Holmes
Headteacher
Monkwick Infant and Nursery School
School Road
Monkwick
Colchester
CO2 8NN

Dear Mrs Holmes

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your academy on 2 December 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss behaviour at the academy.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour and attendance at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

Monkwick Infant and Nursery School is an average size infant academy with 236 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school

meals and those in care of the local authority) is significantly higher than the national average. Many children and their families in the area face challenging circumstances and experience significant social and emotional needs. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well above average, but average for those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are of white British origin. Although average, the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing. The school became an academy on 1 April 2014. Recently, six new teachers have been appointed either to replace those that have retired or because of the increasing numbers of pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since becoming an academy, you have reviewed the behaviour policy with all staff and governors. It provides detailed guidance to all staff in how positive behaviour should be celebrated and what to do if behaviour is unacceptable. My observations during the inspection confirm that staff are consistent in their application of this policy both in class and around the school. Teachers maintain detailed records of any unacceptable or aggressive behaviour in their classrooms. My scrutiny of these records and discussion with pupils indicates that most pupils behave well but a small minority do not. Your records show that the behaviour of these pupils can be very challenging.

This challenging behaviour can lead to disruption in the learning and achievement of other pupils in the same class. It is clear that sanctions are consistently applied, but you have resorted to using fixed-term half day exclusions in the past to ensure the safety and well-being of other pupils and staff. The use of part-time timetables for any pupil who exhibits significantly challenging and aggressive behaviour is monitored very closely by yourself and the local behaviour support team. It is good that parents and carers are fully involved in this and work is provided for such pupils at home until they are re-integrated back into school fulltime. A review of your data confirms a significant reduction in the use of fixed term exclusions since becoming an academy to below the national average. Discussions with a number of parents and carers during the inspection suggest they have few concerns about behaviour within the school and that any unacceptable behaviour is managed well by yourself and the staff.

My observations in the Early Years and Years 1 and 2 confirm that most pupils are keen to learn and concentrate on their work. In a Year 2 class, the pupils used scissors responsibly to cut paper spirals as decorations for sale to other pupils at their enterprise stall at the forthcoming Christmas fair. In those lessons where the pupils spend too much time on the carpet, concentration is quickly lost by the pupils. These pupils become distracted and disturb the learning of others because they interrupt what others are saying and do not listen carefully to what is asked of them.

Overall, pupils respond well to the high levels of care and support provided by all the staff. My observations and talking to pupils confirm that positive relationships are evident between staff and pupils within an inclusive climate for learning. This is greatly valued by many parents, of whom some travel a distance to get this level of care and support for their child. This high quality care is most evident in the Nursery

and Reception classes where parents and carers enter the rooms at the start of the day with a buzz of excitement as these children are greeted by the staff.

Pupils are polite and friendly towards visitors and keen to talk to me about their lessons and playing with their friends. During the inspection I observed pupils moving sensibly in an orderly way around the school between the classrooms and the hall under the guidance of staff. They sit quietly in the school hall waiting to be led by teachers in the singing of songs and carols in preparation for a performance to parents at the end of term.

All pupils eat together sensibly and calmly in the dining hall. They queue patiently waiting to get their meal and respond well to lunchtime staff when guided to a seat. Older pupils take it in turns to carefully clear waste food and cutlery from the pupils' dinner trays. This develops their sense of responsibility well. Many pupils say that they enjoy eating the freshly cooked food and look forward to the healthy choices provided each week.

Playtimes are well supervised by staff, and pupils play with others sensibly on and around the wide range of apparatus and play surfaces. Older pupils respond well to the task of holding up the 'Green Lollipops' as a signal to the rest of the school that playtime is over and it is time to return to class. This develops their sense of responsibility well while providing a quick and efficient means of beginning the next lessons as the pupils make their way calmly back to class. Discussions with pupils indicate that sometimes there are disagreements and incidents between pupils at playtimes but that these are usually resolved either by themselves or the staff on duty. No aggressive behaviour was observed at morning play during the inspection. My observations in each class during the indoor lunchtime play due to rain, noted that all pupils were actively involved in worthwhile play under the supervision of support staff and teachers; such as making models with construction equipment, dancing or drawing.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes respond well to good opportunities for them to develop their personal and social skills. The children happily share the equipment such as rolling small balls down a gutter pipe outside and pouring sand into containers in the sand tray. However, some of these young children find it difficult to sit quietly listening to the teacher and have a tendency to call out when others are talking. This is not always corrected by the staff and examples of this were also observed in Year 1. Consequently, children are not being encouraged to be good listeners at every opportunity and this restricts the effectiveness of future learning and potential achievement.

Since becoming an academy you have continued to work closely with other local agencies to reduce the very high numbers of pupils who have been persistently absent from school and improve the overall rates of attendance. Analysis of your latest attendance data for the academic year 2013/14 confirms a clear and sustained trend of improvement in overall pupil attendance. For example, the proportion of those pupils persistently absent has been halved from 15 per cent in 2012/13 to seven percent in 2013/14. This significant reduction is a direct result of your drive to improve attendance, the promotion of good attendance rewards for the pupils, and the concerted actions of a part-time family support worker employed by the academy. Furthermore, overall pupil attendance is now at broadly average levels at

95.5% this term. Parents and carers of pupils are fully aware of the benefits that good attendance has on the progress their children make at school. This is reflected in good levels of punctuality each morning as class teachers greet both pupils and parents at the classroom doors. Very few pupils arrived late at the school on the day of the inspection.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all pupils are encouraged to listen carefully when others are talking so that lessons flow smoothly.
- Ensure that the management of any challenging behaviour has a minimal effect on the learning and achievement of other pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Essex, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector