

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



16 November 2015

Ross McTaggart
Headteacher
Barnes Farm Junior School
Henniker Gate
Chelmer Village
Chelmsford
CM2 6QH

Dear Mr McTaggart

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barnes Farm Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 4 November 2015, 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 April 2015. 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school. The school should take further action to:

- Monitor the impact of your actions more closely by ensuring that you and other leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Identify good practice in teaching to share, as well as any training needs. Provide teachers with developmental feedback on the quality of their teaching.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has left the school and three have been recruited. One governor has left and the governing body are in the process of recruiting a replacement. The leadership structure has been reviewed, phase leaders on the senior leadership team have been replaced by an inclusion leader and a curriculum provision and extension leader.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other leaders including the leader of the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (the inclusion manager). I visited classrooms with you, talked to pupils and looked at the work in pupils' books. I met with three teaching assistants and three governors including the Chair and vice-chair. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's action plans and looked at your monitoring records of teaching and learning.

Main findings

You and your staff have begun to implement the actions detailed in the appropriate development plans.

You have reviewed the way that teaching assistants are deployed in the school. With the help of an external adviser you and the inclusion manager have re-organised this support to make it more effective. Teaching assistants report that they are now more able to help pupils improve. This is because they have time to meet with teachers in order to plan how they will work with pupils in lessons. Teaching assistants are also now used more effectively to support small groups and individuals who need help to catch up. You have ensured that teaching assistants have been trained to teach these small-group sessions well. The inclusion manager checks that pupils receive the support they need. The school does not yet monitor the impact of this additional support. The inclusion manager has plans to do this at the end of the term.

In the classrooms we visited the work in pupils' English and mathematics books was well presented. Teachers and pupils meet the school's expectations for how work is presented and how teachers will mark books. Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils about what they have done well and how to improve their work. The quality of writing in pupils' topic books compares well with the work in English books. This is further evidence of consistently high expectations of pupils. In the lessons we visited, most pupils worked well and concentrated on their tasks. Older pupils in particular spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their work. Occasionally, progress slowed for some younger pupils when their attention wandered.

You have reviewed how writing is taught across the school. You have made your expectations clear to all staff. Pupils now have more regular opportunities to write and they are responding well to these opportunities. 'Hot, cold and warm' tasks give pupils useful opportunities to consolidate their learning and to demonstrate they have fully understood and mastered the concepts which they are learning. You and other leaders have also reviewed the mathematics curriculum. Pupils now have more regular opportunities to use their basic skills to solve problems.

The new homework journals give pupils engaging tasks to complete at home. Pupils can choose from a menu of activities to consolidate learning in school. Pupils are proud of their homework journals and enjoy completing a range of activities. The quality of the work they produce matches that found in their English and mathematics books. This initiative is also helpful in engaging parents as partners in their children's learning.

A review of governance has been helpful in improving the effectiveness of the governing body. Governors are now asking more challenging questions of school leaders. They are better able to track progress by analysing the achievement information leaders provide. Some governors have met with pupils to gain their views about the better support they receive from teaching assistants. Governors now ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure and that all of the important pre-employment checks are completed and recorded diligently.

You have planned more regular monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment. Plans are in place to observe teaching and learning regularly and to include all leaders in reviewing the work in pupils' books. You have missed deadlines, however. This means that you do not provide enough regular feedback to teachers about how to improve teaching. You are not identifying training needs or good practice well enough.

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

External support

The school is drawing on support from the local authority, including to improve leadership. The local authority representative visits the school regularly and works with school leaders. The local authority also supports the governing body through the improvement board which monitors the school's progress in partnership with governors.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter

Her Majesty's Inspector