

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



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Karen Briggs  
Headteacher  
Cobblers Lane Primary School  
Cobblers Lane  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 2HN

Dear Mrs Briggs

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cobblers Lane Primary School, Wakefield**

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2014. 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:

- Improve outcomes at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 by increasing pupils' enjoyment and skills in reading, and the accuracy and quality of their writing; and by increasing teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics to more accurately deal with pupils' misconceptions.
- Ensure that new middle leaders bring about measurable improvements in their area of responsibility.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. In addition, a telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority. School action plans and reports were scrutinised and visits were made to a number of classes with the acting headteacher.

## **Context**

The headteacher is on a phased return following an accident at the beginning of term. A new literacy leader joined the school in September. Staff have new roles leading Key Stage 1 and special educational needs. There is a newly qualified teacher and a temporary teacher in Key Stage 1. An inclusion support worker and four additional teaching assistants have been appointed.

## **Main findings**

The school's 2015 results were lower than those for 2014 at the end of all key stages. Phonics results improved from a low base and remain below average. School information indicates that children entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with less than typical skills and the majority made at least typical progress. At Key Stage 1, results were affected by the legacy of weaker teaching in Year 1 and some low attendance. School data for pupils in school for the whole of the key stage indicate that they made at least expected progress in reading and writing but less progress in mathematics. Weaker attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 was hindered by a long legacy of disrupted learning caused by frequent changes and absence of staff.

Staffing has been more settled over the last year and in-year progress data indicate that pupils are making expected rates of progress in most subjects and year groups. Current pupils are working with good concentration in a positive and purposeful working environment. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' assessed needs and are structured well to promote learning. Standards of presentation are stronger and expectations of joined-up handwriting are communicated consistently. Marking is being used more precisely and more consistently to guide pupils' learning and to help them improve their own work. The high quality of pupils' artwork strengthens their confidence to succeed.

The new inclusion support worker, working alongside a learning mentor, is enabling the school to manage incidents of challenging behaviour more effectively. As a result, there has been a marked reduction in disruption to class learning, fewer fixed-term exclusions and fewer occasions where pupils have been restrained physically. The calmer learning atmosphere enables pupils to get on with their work better. Leaders now have more time to focus on improving teaching and learning.

The mathematics leader is improving the teaching of mathematics through better training and more detailed assessment and marking. Her checking of pupils' books and teachers' planning has strengthened the consistency of teaching and learning. New resources are ensuring that the new mathematics curriculum is covered systematically. The resources for teaching mathematics are matched to a new framework for assessment which provides clearer guidance for teachers. Over the last year, the daily teaching of mental mathematics has improved pupils' knowledge and agility with numbers and they are applying these basic skills more confidently in a range of calculations. Further professional development is needed to increase teachers' subject knowledge in accurately identifying pupils' misconceptions.

The new literacy leader has identified the need to encourage reading at Key Stage 2, including a more exciting range of resources, more banding to help pupils choose books at the right reading level and more adult support for weaker readers. She has a clear analysis and a realistic action plan to tackle weaknesses in writing, including the need to improve spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The number of teaching assistants has increased and their use has improved as a result of regular training, careful deployment and regular joint planning with teachers. They are being used in more targeted and flexible ways to prepare pupils for a new topic and to provide more prompt help for pupils who have not understood a lesson. Targeted interventions are meeting a wider range of identified special educational needs and their impact is more rigorously evaluated. Earlier intervention is developing children's social skills and learning behaviour in the early years more quickly. At Key Stage 1, more enquiry-based learning is helping to promote pupils' engagement, behaviour and motivation, especially for boys.

Governors were closely involved in the strategic staffing decisions to improve management of behaviour, the leadership and teaching of English, and support for learning. They closely scrutinise all aspects of the school and regularly ask senior and middle leaders to account for the impact of their actions. An external review of governance helped them to refine their procedures. They were disappointed by the 2015 outcomes, see improvements in teaching and leadership, and cautiously await to see whether these are translated into more sustained progress by pupils.

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 local authority school improvement officer knows the school well and has provided effective support and challenge for school leaders. She has helped to identify good practice from other schools, and training for middle leaders. The behaviour support service has provided effective support for particular pupils, especially those on dual placement with another education provider.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**