

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



29 January 2016

Ms Louise Regan  
Headteacher  
Hillocks Primary and Nursery School  
Unwin Road  
Sutton-in-Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG17 4ND

Dear Ms Regan

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hillocks Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2016, 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 June 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that urgent action is taken to:

- ensure that plans for school improvement are fit for purpose, address all of the issues identified at the previous inspection, and that governors and leaders are clear about their individual responsibilities in making sure that actions are completed within agreed timescales
- implement effective systems to monitor teaching, learning and assessment in Key Stage 1 to ensure that there are rapid and sustained improvements in pupils' progress and attainment.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the subject leader for mathematics, and two members of the governing body, including the Chair, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke to a representative from the local authority, evaluated your plans for improvement and looked at a range of school documents, including minutes from governing body meetings and information about the safeguarding of pupils. I made visits to classes with you, looked at work in books and met with a group of eight pupils. I looked at the school's website.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, one teacher has left the school and two permanent appointments have been made.

## **Main findings**

Your plans for school improvement are not strong enough to help improve the school as quickly as is needed. You have outlined priorities for most, but not all, of the key areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. You have failed to meet your own timelines for the review of agreed actions. As a result, governors do not know what improvements have been made in the priority areas of mathematics and spelling. In addition, measures of success for individual actions do not relate closely enough to expectations for improvements in pupils' progress and attainment. Consequently, it is not possible for leaders to be held to account for the impact of their actions. Leaders and governors acknowledge that outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 1 have been consistently too low for a considerable period of time, but this is not reflected strongly enough in your current plans.

Since September, teachers and leaders have worked hard to get to grips with your new systems for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. However, information about the performance of pupils is not being shared effectively with governors and this is contributing to the governors' inability to have a clear view of current standards in the school.

You have been proactive in ensuring that the external review of governance has been completed. It recommends that membership of the governing body is reviewed as a priority to ensure that governors have the skills needed to provide the level of challenge and support required.

You have ensured that all teachers have targets for improvement, but the targets do not link closely enough to the school's current priorities. The timelines which you have identified for the review of these targets are not tight enough and do not reflect the sense of urgency required to improve the school's performance.

The teacher with responsibility for the leadership of mathematics has strong subject knowledge; she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the teaching of mathematics in the school. However, there is more to be done to ensure that all teachers implement the agreed approach to the teaching of mathematics and that, as a result, pupils gain a better understanding of key mathematical vocabulary.

There is evidence in some classes that the most-able pupils are being challenged more effectively. Pupils in a Year 6 class were confident to explain to me how 'partner work' helps them to challenge one another's ideas and to 'think more deeply'. They were also eager to explain how the new 'steps to success' assessment booklets are helping them to know what they need to do next as well as make them feel proud about what they have already achieved.

You have taken steps to improve the quality of information on the school's current website, while you are waiting for a new website to become up and running. Information relating to the impact of additional funding is now clearer. Nevertheless, some key information, including details relating to governors and the curriculum, is still missing.

The good behaviour of pupils throughout the school and the high levels of care and support given by adults continue to be strengths of the school, of which you and governors are justly proud.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide support to the school over a sustained period of time. You recognise the value of recent paired work with the school improvement officer to scrutinise pupils' books and to moderate progress. However, the local authority acknowledges that more needs to be done urgently to increase the pace of improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clare Cossor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**