

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 03000 131432
Email: victoria.mortimore@ofsted.gov.uk



7 October 2015

Mrs Joanne Loach
Headteacher
Kingsthorpe Primary School
Cranbourne Road
Kingstanding
Birmingham
B44 0BX

Dear Mrs Loach

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingsthorpe Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 September 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that mathematical activities are sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able pupils
- make sure that the school improvement plan contains measurable success criteria so that governors can check the impact of actions taken by school leaders.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the teacher with responsibility for the early years and the member of

staff with responsibility for pupils' attendance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, the local authority representative, who is also the headteacher of Brookfields Primary School, and the headteacher of New Hall Primary School. Both headteachers are local leaders of education. The school improvement plan was evaluated. During this monitoring inspection, you and the deputy headteacher joined me on brief visits to some classes. We talked to pupils and looked at samples of writing and mathematics work. A range of documentation was reviewed, including attendance information, feedback to staff following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work, and the latest information about pupils' achievement.

Context

There have been a number of staffing changes. Three teachers, including the assistant headteacher, have left since the previous inspection. Four new permanent teachers and three temporary teachers joined the school in September 2015. At the time of this monitoring inspection, three teachers were on family leave.

Main findings

You are resolute in your determination to ensure that Kingsthorpe Primary becomes a good school. Together with the deputy headteacher, you have created a culture where teachers and teaching assistants are willing to learn from each other in order to improve their practice.

The systems for checking teaching and pupils' achievement have been strengthened considerably. You and the deputy headteacher are placing a greater emphasis on the impact of teaching over time on the progress of all pupils. Teachers are responding promptly to the advice they receive following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work. During our brief visits to lessons, we observed teachers checking pupils' understanding and making sure that pupils understood what they were expected to learn. The pupils we spoke with were very positive about the precise guidance they receive from their teachers. They commented that this guidance helps them to improve their work. You acknowledge that further action needs to be taken to help pupils make faster progress in mathematics. In particular, the mathematical activities for the more able pupils are not always challenging enough.

In the early years, there has been an increased emphasis on promoting children's speaking skills. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes were keen to talk to us about their activities. We also observed children choosing and sharing the materials they needed to complete their tasks.

Attendance has improved. Staff are working more closely with the few parents who do not send their children to school regularly. As a result, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced markedly.

The revised school improvement plan is appropriately focused on strengthening teaching, leadership and raising pupils' achievement. The plan does not always contain measurable success criteria. Consequently, it is difficult for governors to check whether the actions taken by school leaders are making enough of a difference to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

The governors have reviewed their roles and responsibilities. They have formed themselves into teams. Each team regularly reviews specific aspects of the school's work. Consequently, governors now have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members of the governing body are planning to meet regularly with the teachers who have responsibility for specific subjects so that they can check the difference they are making to teaching and pupils' learning.

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 has arranged a suitable range of support for staff at Kingsthorpe Primary School. The local authority representative who is also the headteacher of Brookfields Primary School is providing senior leaders with a good level of support and challenge. She has helped you to revise the school improvement plan, prioritise the actions that need to be taken and organise additional support and training. Staff have benefited from support from the Greet Teaching School Alliance, the Boldmere Teaching School Alliance and the headteacher of New Hall Primary School. This combined support has contributed to improvements in teaching and leadership as well as more accurate assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector