

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



19 April 2016

Karen Charlton
Monkseaton Middle School
Vernon Drive
Monkseaton
Whitley Bay
Tyne and Wear
NE25 8JN

Dear Mrs Charlton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Monkseaton Middle School

Following my visit to your school on 15 March 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.

The school should take further action to:

- raise staff expectations of what pupils can achieve and consistently implement agreed school developments
 - develop the use of the recently introduced pupil progress information system to improve the match of teaching to pupils' needs
 - ensure that leaders check carefully on pupils' progress over time
 - put in place a clearly understood plan, which includes sharply focused actions and identifies those accountable for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken
-
- Improve the role of governors in holding senior and middle leaders to account for the school's improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We visited classrooms together, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' work. A range of documents were scrutinised, including records relating to the monitoring of teaching and governing body minutes. I checked documentation and information linked to safeguarding.

Context

The school has appointed five teachers: additional English and mathematics teachers, a modern foreign languages teacher and a part-time music teacher. Two additional teaching assistants have been employed and an additional part-time learning mentor. There are four new members of the governing body.

Main findings

Expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve are not high enough in English and mathematics. Teachers do not promptly pick up on weaknesses in pupils' basic grammar and punctuation. As a result, pupils' skills are not improving quickly enough. Written work in books is not showing required progress, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6.

A new progress tracking system is in the early stages of development. The whole-school approach to using this new system is not universally well understood.

The introduction of regular pupil progress meetings in English and mathematics is providing the opportunity to identify where pupils' progress needs to improve. However, senior leaders are not sufficiently involved with these meetings to provide the necessary challenge where progress is not strong enough.

Leaders are overly positive in their judgements when they are checking on the impact of teaching on learning. Senior and middle leaders' view of 2015 key stage 2 results has focused too much on improved attainment levels, and not enough on progress measures in reading, writing and mathematics which were significantly below those found nationally. Leaders' judgements of the quality of presentation in books are too generous. High proportions of pupils do not adhere to the school's presentation policy. Jotter books in mathematics do not encourage a positive attitude to presentation or pride in work.

The school's revised marking policy is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. On occasions some work is not marked as regularly as indicated in the school's policy.

You have put in place plans to address the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. While the plans are linked to the areas requiring improvement, some areas could be improved by identifying more specific timeframes. Governors' understanding of the school improvement plans and the links with the governors' development plan are not clear enough. Early work to improve the school improvement plan has begun with support from the headteacher of a successful local school. At the time of the visit, this plan was not available to review.

The school promptly commissioned an external review of governance which was completed by a national leader for governance. The plan is checked regularly for progress and there is evidence that governors have started to respond to a number of the actions. However, the level of governor challenge and the rigour with which senior leaders are held to account for progress is still not sharp enough.

External support

The local authority has provided high levels of support in a number of areas including leadership development for middle leaders in English and the coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo), and additional school improvement partner time. School-to-school support from a local outstanding school has just been commissioned. The school has not responded effectively enough to the support provided which has diminished the potential for impact on the school's overall effectiveness.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Tyneside Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector