

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



5 May 2016

Mrs Michelle Burbidge
Acting Headteacher
Hawkes Farm Primary School
Hawks Road
Hailsham
East Sussex
BN27 1ND

Dear Mrs Burbidge

Special measures monitoring inspection of Hawkes Farm Primary School

Following my visit with Mark Cole, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 April 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 2015.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Close
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in November 2015

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - acquiring an accurate and thorough understanding of the school's strengths and development needs to be able to plan for improvements in teaching and learning
 - ensuring that governors are informed, and proficient in their role, so that they offer challenge and support to the school's leadership
 - working with good and outstanding schools to obtain a clear understanding of what constitutes high-quality teaching and learning
 - putting in place systems to manage the performance of teachers
 - clarifying leadership and management responsibilities in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, through leaders:
 - monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers, and the quality of pupils' learning, by visiting classrooms more frequently, checking the quality of pupils' work and giving good-quality feedback to teachers about how to improve
 - targeting training more effectively for teachers, rewarding only the best teaching with pay rises, and responding promptly to any teaching that falls below expectations.
- Improve outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, with a particular focus on the disadvantaged, and on boys' reading and writing, by:
 - improving teachers' planning and their organisation of lessons so that pupils have opportunities to make rapid progress
 - ensuring teachers use assessment more effectively to provide work in lessons which matches pupils' needs, to check progress in lessons and to give effective feedback to pupils about how to improve.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to show how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 April 2016

Evidence

During the inspection, inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. Meetings were held with the chair and another member of the interim executive board, and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors talked to pupils to gather their views of the school. Inspectors took into account the views of parents, talking to them during the inspection and also by considering 109 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire. A number of documents were scrutinised, including the local authority's statement of action and the school improvement plan. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class and looked at a range of pupils' work. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school was also observed.

Context

Since the last inspection the substantive headteacher has left the school and the governing body has been replaced with an interim executive board. The deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher and a new acting deputy headteacher has been appointed from within the teaching staff.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

School leaders and members of the interim executive board are acting with urgency to address the areas identified as needing improvement in the last inspection. There are now clear lines of responsibility within the school's leadership team and staff at all levels have accepted the challenge of moving the school forward at a rapid pace.

New systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning have been established. Because of this, school leaders have an improving grasp of the strengths and areas that require urgent attention in order for the school to improve.

The performance of staff at all levels, including support staff, is now monitored more consistently. Teachers told inspectors the new arrangements for monitoring classroom practice are already having an impact on the way they teach. Although they felt overwhelmed with the many changes being implemented in the first instance, they are now more comfortable with the systems that have been put in place and feel that most of the guidance and support they receive from leaders is helping them to provide better quality teaching.

Links with external partners have been newly established or strengthened. The acting headteacher is benefiting from the support and guidance of a local leader of education, who is the headteacher of a nearby school. This partnership, brokered by the local authority, has also enabled staff to observe high-quality teaching and

learning in the local leader of education's own school, as well as another school recently judged to be good by Ofsted.

Although the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be inadequate at the last inspection, there are still pockets of good teaching within the school. School leaders should make more of this good practice to help develop the skills of other staff.

Members of the interim executive board have quickly established the key priorities in order for them to gain a better understanding of the school's performance. Between them they have the appropriate skills and expertise to both support and challenge senior leaders to bring about the rapid improvements required. However, the interim executive board should take care when influencing performance targets for teaching staff. While aspirations are rightly high, targets that appear to be impossible to reach run the risk of demotivating staff, impacting negatively on their central purpose.

The review of pupil premium funding as recommended in the last inspection report has been completed. As a result, an action plan has been drawn up in order to ensure that provision for disadvantaged pupils is as effective as it can be. The school has also appointed a member of the senior leadership team as 'pupil premium champion'.

A review of governance has not been completed because the governing body has been replaced by an interim executive board.

The interim executive board and local authority have moved quickly to consider the long-term future of the school. Academy status is being actively explored. The process to find an appropriate sponsor has started.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching is improving because school leaders have begun to build a better understanding of which aspects of teaching need to improve in order for pupils to make better progress. This is enabling leaders to offer teachers more effective guidance on how to improve. However, the impact of improved monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not yet as strong as it needs to be because of the relatively short period of time since the new systems have been in place.

Where teaching is stronger in the school, teachers are able to offer appropriate levels of challenge to different groups of pupils, ensuring that most make acceptable progress. Inspectors observed some lessons where pupils were highly motivated and clearly enjoying their learning. In these instances, pupils were totally engaged with the task in hand and teachers were actively moving learning on.

Where teaching is weaker, the level of challenge is either too easy or too hard and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Inspectors also observed instances where pupils were unclear about what they were learning, or were confused by the task they had been set, the consequences of which were off-task behaviours and frustration for the pupils concerned.

Assessment of pupils' progress, both day to day and over time, remains an area that needs to improve. Teachers are beginning to come to terms with the school's relatively new assessment systems and procedures, but need more guidance and support to improve this crucial aspect of their practice. This should be a priority for school leaders in coming months.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

During the last inspection, inspectors identified that pupils' personal development and welfare were good, although behaviour required improvement. This remains the case, due largely to the instances where some pupils become disengaged with learning because teaching is still not good enough.

Pupils' general behaviour is improving. The school's behaviour policy is now applied in a more consistent manner and staff and pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved. Pupils were very clear that instances of poor behaviour in classrooms have fallen considerably. Older pupils said that disruptions to their learning due to poor behaviour were no longer the norm. Younger pupils told inspectors that the school was a safe place to be and that people were kind to each other.

During formal discussions with inspectors, a representative group of pupils from Year 1 through to Year 6 said that they enjoy coming to school because teachers care about them and other children are friendly. When asked about what aspects of school they would like to be improved, they found it difficult to find anything that was a worry or deep concern.

The personal development and welfare of pupils continue to be served well and the behaviour of pupils in classrooms is improving and inextricably linked to the quality of teaching, which is also improving.

Outcomes for pupils

It was clear to inspectors during their visits to classrooms that outcomes for pupils are improving. However, the pace of improvement needs to be much more rapid for outcomes to be judged as good in future.

Outcomes in the early years were judged to be good during the last inspection. Provision in Reception remains very strong, with children making good progress from their different starting points. This includes those few pupils who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those who have special educational needs or

disability. Boys perform equally as well as girls. Parents told inspectors that they thought their children were making very good progress. One parent told inspectors that she was amazed at the progress her child had made since joining the school.

In key stages 1 and 2, targets for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are high, but it is unclear that these will be met during this school year. This applies to all groups, including those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who have special educational needs or disability and those pupils who are most able.

Because the school's relatively new system for assessment without national curriculum levels is not as fully developed as it needs to be, monitoring pupils' progress to establish accurate predictions of pupils' outcomes is an area that leaders need to strengthen. They should do this as a matter of urgency.

External support

The support of the local authority in bringing about rapid improvement has had a good impact. School leaders and teaching staff have benefited from high-quality support and guidance from the senior improvement adviser assigned to the school. Other advisers are helping develop middle leaders so that they can have greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority also acted quickly to ensure the smooth transition of arrangements for governance. It is actively supporting the interim executive board in its endeavours to ensure the long-term future of the school.