

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



13 May 2016

Mrs Jane Byron  
Foxes Piece School  
Newfield Road  
Marlow  
Buckinghamshire  
SL7 1JW

Dear Mrs Byron

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Foxes Piece School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 April 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.

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

**Senior leaders and governors are 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:

- match tasks more closely to pupils' abilities in mathematics, particularly in problem-solving activities
- ensure that all leaders and governors evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.

## **Evidence**

I met with you and the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, governors and a representative of Buckinghamshire Learning Trust. I also met with the headteacher of the national support school, Chepping View. Together with the leaders of English and mathematics, I looked at pupils' exercise books. I considered a range of documents, including the school's action plan and risk assessments, and took into account 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.

## **Context**

Two teachers left in July. One new teacher started in September. A key stage 1 leader and a key stage 2 leader were appointed at the start of this academic year. One teacher has taken responsibility for developing teaching and learning.

## **Main findings**

You have responded quickly and positively to the previous inspection outcome, using your passionate and determined approach to focus the school community on securing necessary improvements. You have continued to develop a consistent culture in the school that promotes a high level of care, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. It is clear that everyone has a part to play in this and it accurately reflects the school motto, 'everyone is someone'. As a result, staff are committed to realising your ambitions and are making changes to meet your expectations. Every classroom is bright and well organised, with wall displays to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics. All pupils have personalised targets that set out the next steps in their handwriting, and mathematical and spelling, grammar and punctuation skills.

You wasted no time in ensuring that risk assessment procedures are robust. Risk assessments are carried out appropriately, take into account relevant information and identify the right controls. Governors oversee these important checks. You also took steps to strengthen the security of the school site. You have changed the layout of accommodation and invested in new fencing. Consequently, pupils can no longer access the car park or the other buildings without adult supervision.

You have rightly distributed leadership responsibilities more widely. For example, the leader of English is supporting improvements to teaching and learning. The leader of English carries out regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provides individual teachers with helpful feedback and well-focused support. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Middle leaders are also leading new developments. The key stage 1 leader and key stage 2 leader are currently implementing changes to the assessment system. Middle leaders now report to governors about their work and are able to explain their actions and some of the reasons for them.

The action plan is fit for purpose. It addresses all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan sets out clearly what will be done, and when, and who is responsible for each aspect. You have identified milestones to measure the progress of the plan at regular intervals. From this, you identify any necessary next steps. Consequently, the plan is on track. Governors check the progress that leaders are making against the areas for improvement. Nevertheless, leaders and governors are not yet checking carefully enough the impact of their work on pupils' achievement.

Governors are increasingly effective. The review of governance was completed in September and governors developed an action plan in response. Therefore, most of the recommended changes have been implemented. For example, there are fewer committees and governors have clearly defined roles. Governors have received training to help them analyse pupils' progress information and are starting to use this to better hold leaders to account. Governors' minutes show that they are increasingly asking challenging questions. Governors are also adopting a greater strategic role. They have developed a suitably ambitious long-term plan for the school. However, this plan is new and has yet to be instigated.

You also prioritised changes to teaching and learning. In September, additional training strengthened teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils' achievement in writing in key stage 1 and key stage 2 has risen as a result of changes to the curriculum. Teachers now plan lessons that include opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils' books show that they are regularly practising this when writing and teachers are giving helpful feedback that pupils use to improve their work.

The presentation of pupils' work and handwriting has also improved. You set high expectations for this, as well as providing new books and pens to incentivise pupils. Pupils with special educational needs or disability are also supported through the use of technology to show pride in their work. The 'presentation award', which they can keep on their desk for a week, is much coveted by pupils. As a result, pupils' books across the school show a high standard of presentation.

Mathematics teaching is more prominent. Pupils have more opportunities to practise their skills with regular homework. For example, in key stage 1, pupils have home learning bags that include mathematical puzzles or baking challenges, complete with a chef's hat. Each week, pupils now have an additional 'creative mathematics' lesson where they encounter problems and investigations. However, these tasks are not always well matched to pupils' learning needs. In key stage 2 in particular, they are sometimes too challenging, even for the most-able pupils.

Leaders have made changes to the ways in which pupils' progress is checked. There is a new assessment policy that sets out an appropriate range of evidence for teachers to use to measure pupils' learning. Some of this is evident in pupils' books. For example, in mathematics, teachers ask pupils additional questions to check their

understanding of key concepts. Teachers are checking their assessments with each other and with other schools. Leaders have ensured that different groups of pupils are clearly identified, such as the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Additional provision is in place to better meet their learning needs. However, the assessment system is under development and does not yet provide an accurate view of how well pupils, including those in different groups, are achieving in all subjects.

### **External support**

Buckinghamshire Learning Trust has provided considerable, effective support to leaders and governors. This has included ensuring that leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching and learning are accurate. The trust has also helped leaders and governors to evaluate their progress against the areas for improvement.

Chepping View School has provided effective training to governors. Recently, a new programme of support has commenced. There are suitable plans in place to further develop leadership and improve teaching and learning, especially in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Dulon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**