

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
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Mr Mal Kerr  
Headteacher  
Noel-Baker School  
Bracknell Drive  
Alvaston  
Derby  
DE24 0BR

Dear Mr Kerr

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Noel-Baker School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 May 2016, accompanied by Paul Watson, Ofsted Inspector, 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 third 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 section 5 inspection before the one that took place in February 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- rapidly improve the way that pupils' behaviour and welfare are managed
- eliminate disruption in lessons, so that all pupils can get on with their work
- address the inconsistency of teaching and achievement, particularly within mathematics
- improve the attendance of those pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders and we reviewed documents relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. An inspector met the special educational needs coordinator. I spoke with a representative of the local authority and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors visited a range of classrooms to see learning taking place. They observed pupils as they arrived to school and saw how pupils behaved during breaktime, lunchtime and in their lessons.

## **Context**

The school is due to become an academy under the sponsorship of the L.E.A.D Academy Trust in autumn 2016.

## **Main findings**

The management of pupils' behaviour is ineffective. Leaders have not sustained the improvement previously seen and have allowed the standard of pupils' behaviour to slip. The behaviour and conduct of pupils are poor and standards of behaviour have deteriorated since the previous monitoring inspection. Teachers pick and choose which bits of the behaviour policy to follow, and this means that pupils feel that they can get away with bad behaviour. Too many pupils misbehave and disrupt the learning of others. Pupils told inspectors that the day of the inspection was unusual because there was more staff presence during breaktime and at lunch. They said that usually these social times were more chaotic because fewer staff were on duty.

I reviewed a range of processes used by leaders and school staff to safeguard the welfare of pupils. Some of these processes require improvement. Individual staff are working hard within their allocated roles but there is not a well-understood whole-school strategy. You do not have a sharp enough overview of the effectiveness of all this work. I have agreed with you and the chair of the governing body the specific issues that I want you to address as a matter of urgency.

There is evidence that the attendance of some groups of pupils is improving but the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is too low. These pupils cannot benefit from the interventions that are in place unless they come to school. The special educational needs coordinator is aware of this issue and is putting in place strategies to support their attendance. Leaders should ensure that the strategies have the required impact.

Leaders have not made sure that the quality of teaching and achievement is improving in all classes. Teachers' use of the 'Noel-Baker Six' set of classroom expectations is inconsistent. In the best lessons seen by inspectors, teachers used these expectations to make sure that pupils behaved well and made the progress they should. In too many lessons seen, however, the teachers did not adhere to these expectations. As a result, pupils were not welcomed to their lessons, learning objectives were not appropriate, behaviour was poor, marking was infrequent and pupils were not learning. Inspectors, accompanied by senior leaders, observed the weakest teaching in mathematics and in science.

The predicted progress 8 score for the current Year 11 pupils indicates that pupils' achievement should improve. This score measures pupils' progress across a selected set of eight subjects. More pupils than in 2015 are predicted to make the expected progress and more than the expected progress within English. The low predictions for the number of pupils who will make the expected progress within mathematics are a cause for concern. The interventions that leaders have put in place to improve teaching and achievement are working within some subjects, but not in mathematics.

The improvement seen at the previous monitoring visit has not been sustained. Senior leaders do not have a good enough overview of their areas for responsibility. A lot of work is undertaken but some of this work is too haphazard and does not help improve standards within the school. Too much inconsistency remains across subject areas and not all subject leaders are making sure that the 'Noel-Baker Six' set of classroom expectations are adhered to within their department. Leadership practice is not good enough and needs to sharpen.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I intend to conduct a further monitoring visit.

### **External support**

Leaders have welcomed the extensive support provided by the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust. However, the trust is not yet in a position to take overall responsibility for improvement in the school. The local authority has not been effective in ensuring that leadership practice is rigorous enough to address the areas identified for improvement at the section 5 inspection, conducted in February 2015.

I have requested that an external review of the processes used to safeguard the welfare of pupils is undertaken. The local authority has agreed to conduct this work as a matter of urgency.

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

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**