

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 July 2016

Mrs Clare Hayes
Principal
Monteney Primary School
Monteney Crescent
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S5 9DN

Dear Mrs Hayes

Short inspection of Monteney Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school converted to become an academy in April 2013. The school's predecessor, of the same name, was judged to be good at its previous inspection in May 2012. Monteney Primary School is part of a multi-academy trust called Steel City Schools Partnership (SCSP) which grew out of a hard federation with one local school and a partnership with another school in Sheffield.

This school continues to be good.

You and your team have created a happy, vibrant school of which the pupils and staff are proud to be members. Your focus on 'pride in presentation' typifies the way you seek to raise aspirations and encourage the pupils to try their best, whatever the activity they are undertaking. Similarly, the expectation the school places on the pupils to produce extended pieces of work to improve their 'writing stamina' helps to build their resilience and enjoyment of studying. The working atmosphere in Monteney is purposeful and productive, and the vast majority of pupils feel that behaviour of their classmates in lessons is good; I agree with them.

The school provides a pleasant environment in which pupils move around the corridors in well-ordered fashion, respectful of the building, adults and each other. The playground is well used by the pupils at breaktimes. The parents and carers I spoke to were keen to explain to me how the pupils look after each other to ensure they have someone to play with when they want. Members of the school are welcoming and friendly, from the teaching and kitchen staff to those who look after the site. Lunchtime in the school canteen is a calm, sociable affair, when pupils take the opportunity to chat and when the majority eat a healthy school lunch.

Since Monteney Primary School became an academy in 2013, the school's leaders

have focused clearly on the key areas for improvement identified through an effective self-evaluation process.

- Work to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics has been successful, which has ensured that overall pupil attainment in the subject has improved in each of the last three years. Attainment and progress in mathematics for disadvantaged pupils are now broadly average, although fewer proportionately have achieved the highest levels; this needs to be one of the key next steps for the school.
- The school has planned its curriculum well, which has enabled it to develop an assessment system that identifies the pupils' achievements successfully, keeps parents well-informed and supports the teachers' planning for the next steps in the pupils' learning.
- The school's focus on the importance of good behaviour has been maintained and the pupils have responded positively by continuing to conduct themselves well in lessons.

The school has encountered a number of staffing issues in the last year or so. Despite this, leaders have managed these effectively and ensured that any disruption to the pupils' education has been minimal. Responses to the staff questionnaire indicate that the school's leaders are trusted by teachers. In return, teachers are trusted by the leaders to take risks in their teaching and to innovate in ways that are right for the pupils. Teachers are employed by SCSP and this not only provides support across the trust, but also good professional development opportunities for staff to work in the different contexts of the three SCSP schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school takes very seriously its responsibilities to keep pupils safe and to help pupils make the right decisions to keep themselves safe. Governors on the school's local governing board have undertaken appropriate training to discharge their safeguarding duties effectively. The lead governor has overseen a wide-ranging audit of the implementation and effectiveness of the school's approach to safeguarding across the school. This has led to improved communications about safeguarding, especially with parents.

Teachers take time to talk to and listen to pupils throughout the school day; this supports the school's approach to safeguarding well. Over 94% of the pupils who responded to this inspection's pupil survey agreed that teachers listen to what they have to say. The same proportion felt there is an adult at school who they can talk to if they are worried about anything and that teachers resolve any bullying effectively. The vast majority of pupils feel safe at Montenev.

The school has an effective system for recording staff concerns about individual pupils as they arise, including cases of suspected neglect. These are followed up rigorously by senior leaders and resolved in a timely fashion, including by working effectively with parents, carers and other agencies in the city. The leadership team

has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Through its effective self-evaluation process, the school's leadership team has identified successfully the key areas for improvement. This has led the team to focus on four main areas: pupils' outcomes in mathematics; the school's approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent); the emphasis placed on the pupils' writing; and attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils. In each of these areas, leaders have secured improvement, although the school still has work to do, especially on phonics and writing.
- Improved teaching over time has ensured that pupils' progress and attainment in reading and mathematics have been broadly average over the last two years for all pupils. The gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in these subjects have also narrowed in this period. In 2015, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading and mathematics was in line with, or higher than, their more affluent peers across the country.
- In 2014, the school's leadership took decisive action to stem the pupils' weak performance in phonics by putting in place the current key stage 1 coordinator to evaluate why phonics teaching had not been effective enough. The key stage 1 coordinator's subsequent review identified that the Reception and Year 1 teachers lacked experience in teaching systematic synthetic phonics, training had not been effective and communications between teachers about pupils' progress had been weak. These areas were tackled quickly in 2014/15. This supported the incremental improvements for disadvantaged pupils seen in phonics over the last three years and improved the outcomes for other pupils considerably.
- Current Year 1 pupils are showing continuing improvement in their phonics knowledge and the weakest readers show that they are developing effective strategies for sounding out unfamiliar words. However, the pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, need to demonstrate significant further improvement or they will not make sufficient gains in their reading and spelling.
- The school also identified that the legacy of weaker phonics teaching hampered the pupils' progress in writing, especially spelling. Leaders have sought to tackle this by expecting pupils to write at length. They have also raised expectations about pupils' presentation and given them continuing opportunities to demonstrate their best writing to teachers, each other and their parents through regular exhibitions. This has resulted in better writing and rising attainment by the end of key stage 2. However, the progress of the pupils between ages seven and 11 needs to be greater to ensure they are fully prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils generally enjoy school at Montenev and most have good

attendance. However, in 2014/15 the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was too low. The SCSP leadership swiftly put in place measures to combat this across the trust schools. The measures included: the employment of an attendance officer for SCSP schools; telephone calls to parents and carers early on the first day of absence; and visits to homes of pupils to bring them into school at the early signs of continued absence. The local governing board has played a key role by putting in place a governor specifically linked with attendance as a strategic priority. This year to date, attendance has risen and is now in line with the national average for all groups of pupils.

- Although numbers are relatively small, in recent years high proportions of the most able disadvantaged pupils at Montenev have made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's raised expectations for all pupils are having a particularly positive impact on the most able pupils. The work produced by these pupils is mostly of high quality, as evidenced, for example, in displays of writing and art work around the school, the accuracy of their mathematical calculations in exercise books and their discussions in lessons on topics such as 'Can sport unite the world?' The pupils enjoy the opportunities offered to them to represent their classmates on the school council. The next step up for the pupil councillors to the SCSP 'trust parliament' provides good extension opportunities, especially for the most able pupils.
- The school's Nursery provision ensures that those children who attend from the age of three make a good start at school. Adults talk and listen to the children during meaningful discussions about their activities. Through whole-group, structured question and answer sessions, the teachers successfully introduce early reading skills to the Nursery children. Teachers now build on these skills more successfully when children make the transition to Reception.
- The governors on the local governing board and the SCSP board of directors are clear on their respective lines of responsibility and accountability, which are set out in the trust's scheme of delegation. The local governing board holds you to account for the quality of teaching and the pupils' outcomes, while the directors set the school's strategic direction within the SCSP Trust. The governors have played an effective role in setting the ethos of the school and are knowledgeable about the impact leaders are having on the key areas for improvement.

Next steps for the school

If the school is to continue to maintain good provision for the pupils in the next few years, school leaders, members of the local governing board and the SCSP board of directors must ensure that:

- the teaching of phonics remains the highest priority across the school and that pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, master effective strategies for reading and spelling
- the raised expectations for pupils' writing are maintained so that pupils

- make better progress by the time they leave the school
- the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve their full potential in mathematics by attaining at the highest level possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Sean Harford
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I observed teaching in Nursery, Years 1, 4 and 6, and spoke to pupils throughout the school, including at lunchtime. I discussed the views of the school with a group of parents who generously gave of their time during the day. I also scrutinised pupils' books and other work, and listened to two groups of pupils read. I had extensive discussions with you and your senior leadership team, members of the local governing board and the trust directors, including the SCSP executive principal. I analysed the 17 responses to the online Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, the 86 responses to the pupil survey and 28 responses to the survey of staff. In coming to my judgements, I also reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school.