

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 July 2016

Mr Lee Noble
Headteacher
Whitegate Primary and Nursery School
Middle Fell Way
Clifton Estate
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG11 9JQ

Dear Mr Noble

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whitegate Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 21 June 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 October 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the previous section 5 inspection, in September 2013, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- establish routines to improve pupils' skills in reading and comprehension
- ensure continued professional development of teachers, including those new to the school, so they provide appropriate challenge for pupils, especially in mathematics.

Evidence

During the inspection I held meetings with: you; the leader of the early years; the leaders of key stage 1 and key stage 2 who are also the coordinators of English and mathematics respectively; a local authority adviser; the chair of the governing body; a community governor; and a parent governor. I also met with the business manager and reviewed the single central record. I met with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. I toured the school, accompanied by you, visiting all classes and holding informal conversations with staff and pupils. I evaluated a range of documents including the school's own achievement information, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Context

Since the last inspection, one member of the senior leadership team has started maternity leave. Five teachers will be leaving the school at the end of this academic year. You have recruited new teachers successfully and will be fully staffed in September 2016. The school has an increasing roll. The construction of two new buildings is due to start soon.

Main findings

After initial disappointment following the outcome of the last inspection, you have acted swiftly to boost the morale of your staff. You have created a positive and productive whole-school drive for improvement.

You have recognised the potential for leadership development in certain staff who had taken on leadership responsibilities not long before the last inspection. You have ensured that phase leaders and subject coordinators have benefited from intensive and valuable training and support from a range of sources. This means that they have consolidated their positions and play an increasingly active role in the monitoring of teaching in their subject areas.

You have raised expectations for the quality of teaching and this is reflected in the regular monitoring visits you and other leaders make to lessons. Leaders' evaluations are more accurate, based on moderation with other schools, peer observations and leadership training. They sensibly take into account both pupils' outcomes and the quality of teachers' assessments.

Leaders record well their evaluation of lessons on quality assurance sheets. They use these to form the basis of their helpful feedback to teachers and follow up promptly to check that their expectations are met. Subject leaders can give clear

examples of ways in which they have been able to help teachers develop their skills. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving across the school.

You have introduced six-weekly standardised assessments, which include appropriate levels of challenge. Assessments are recorded on your tracking systems thus enabling leaders to analyse thoroughly the rates of progress of individual pupils and groups. You use this analysis as the basis for discussions in regular progress review meetings with other leaders and teachers. You identify pupils who are not making progress at the rate you expect, and put in place the support they need to help them catch up. You also use this information to highlight areas for development in the quality of teaching and the training needs of your staff, such as ensuring that they provide levels of challenge suitable for the most able pupils. While these systems are in early stages, the school's own achievement information indicates an improving picture of rates of pupils' progress in key stage 2 across all subjects.

You have raised expectations that teachers will routinely challenge pupils in lessons. You have ensured that subject leaders have had appropriate training to gain further experience in developing more complex areas of the curriculum. This has enabled them well to lead relevant sessions on training days.

Since the last inspection, the range of resources your teachers use to support pupils' progress in English and mathematics has increased substantially. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils. They want them routinely to reflect on their work, and to research and improve it using sources of reference they provide. As a result, pupils' use of vocabulary, accuracy of spelling and their reasoning skills are developing well.

You took prompt action after the last inspection to give pupils more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Your introduction of draft writing books has nurtured rapidly in pupils the skills of drafting, reflecting on and redrafting extended pieces of writing, with beneficial effects. Pupils can give clear examples of ways in which they have improved the quality of their writing because of the feedback they have received. They explain how they are using different types of punctuation recommended by their teachers. It is also clear that they are correcting their spelling by using dictionaries, and writing longer pieces. Their ideas are developed through thoughtful questioning from their teachers and teaching assistants. You have chosen carefully themes that encourage pupils to write more. Pupils really enjoy choosing a topic to be covered which represents to them a 'passion project', giving them the opportunity to focus on an area that really interests them. This strategy is highly effective in inspiring pupils' ideas and motivating them to write more.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view on the areas of strength in the

school and are not complacent about those requiring continued improvement. These include improving achievement in reading and comprehension and developing the mastery aspects of the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of a topic. Phase leaders and subject coordinators are clear on ways in which they will continue to develop their roles. Their subject-based action plans are integral to whole-school improvement planning for next year.

Governors commissioned the external review of governance as recommended at the last inspection. They have used this wisely as a developmental opportunity following restructuring of the governing body and it informs their future recruitment plans. They understand, and are committed to, fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. They organise relevant and regular training appropriate for their levels of experience and committee structure. They have a clear and accurate view of the effectiveness of strategies for improvement implemented this year.

The school's website meets government stipulations.

External support

The school has been well supported by its work with the local teaching alliance, as well as through collaboration with local schools and valuable work with an adviser commissioned by the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector