

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



25 November 2016

Matthew Ascroft  
Headteacher  
Offmore Primary School  
Wordsworth Crescent  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire  
DY10 3HA

Dear Mr Ascroft

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Offmore Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 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. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, pupils and governors who gave of their time to meet with me during the inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection in November 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:

- support governors in developing their strategic overview of the school's effectiveness by providing them with summary documents that highlight key messages
- analyse assessment information by prior attainment, as well as by groups of pupils
- build on the successes of the school's work to support vulnerable pupils and their families and strive to further reduce the proportion of pupils who are away from school too often.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, subject leaders and phase leaders, the chair of the governing body and two other governors, the school's house captains and vice-captains, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I looked at the school's plan for improvement and the self-evaluation document. I looked at other documents including assessment information, work in pupils' books, information about pupils' attendance and samples of monitoring records. I toured the school with you and the deputy headteacher, visiting every classroom and outdoors.

## **Context**

There have been substantial changes to staffing at all levels since the school's section 5 inspection in January. The school now has a stable staff group.

## **Main findings**

The school's effectiveness is improving rapidly. The inspection in January 2016 highlighted the need to improve the quality of teaching, to raise attainment and to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils, and to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance. You and other senior leaders have taken decisive action to tackle weaknesses. The action taken so far, and the impact that is showing strongly in the progress that pupils are now making, illustrate clearly the shared determination that Offmore will become a good school as soon as possible.

You and the governing body were under no illusions about the school's effectiveness. You knew that much needed to be done to make sure that the pupils in all year groups received the quality of education to which they are entitled. You have gone about things in a considered way, but with appropriate urgency. You clearly understand that Offmore does not need a 'quick fix', but that change should be embedded and sustainable. To that end, you have not only tackled the areas of weakness identified at the inspection in January, but have gone back to the fundamental values that underpin good teaching and learning. Staff and pupils who spoke to me emphasised the shift in culture, attitudes and learning behaviours that are supporting the changes that are being made. You have enabled both staff and pupils to take responsibility and to play their part in improvement. For example, pupils said 'we can be independent now and we can make choices' and 'we are trusted', as well as 'work is harder now'. You have made sure that senior and middle leaders all play an important part in leading improvement and in supporting teachers to develop their practice. There is an ethos of openness and professional dialogue that includes teaching assistants as well as teachers. Staff spoke of how good practice is shared within school. Other schools in the local authority are now seeking to learn from strengths in Offmore's practice, for example in the early years.

The learning environment has been transformed. Classrooms and corridors are full of examples of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects. Classroom displays reflect the school's emphasis on promoting good learning behaviours and in making sure that pupils understand what they are learning and what will come next. The outdoor environment has also been greatly enhanced and the potential for pupils to learn outside has increased substantially.

Pupils' progress is meticulously assessed and tracked. Teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders have an in-depth knowledge of pupils' progress and attainment across the school. Staff have a wealth of information at their fingertips about the achievement of different year groups and groups such as boys, girls, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are supported through the pupil premium. The information is used well, both to identify trends and areas that require attention, but also to inform monitoring activities. You and the staff are well aware of the need to check on individual pupils as well as looking at class and group averages. Currently, the spreadsheet does not group pupils by prior attainment. It would be helpful to you to do so, so that you can be doubly sure that pupils in all prior attainment groups are making at least the progress that you expect.

Your assessments show that, overall, pupils across the school are making strong progress. This is confirmed by the work in pupils' books. Those in the upper years of key stage 2, including those who are disadvantaged, are making up lost ground at a fast pace, and proportions working within the expectations for their age are growing. This is not only because of higher expectations, but because teachers know their pupils very well, and take swift steps to deal with any gaps in prior learning that they identify. Teachers do not wait for the half-termly data gathering to show if pupils are at risk of falling behind. Immediately they spot that a pupil has not grasped something, or that previous learning is not embedded, they will make 'incidental interventions' for each pupil where necessary, and record these on the school's interactive assessment system.

Staff and pupils have high ambitions for what can be achieved. Your predictions for pupils' attainment at the end of this academic year are based on the progress that has been made so far. If achieved, there will be a substantial improvement on what Offmore's pupils have ever achieved before, and a much more accurate reflection of the pupils' potential.

You are developing systems for assessing pupils' progress in foundation subjects, beginning with French. Staff are sensibly drawing on good practice that already exists at Offmore.

Your short-term plan for improvement is appropriately focused on the key things that need to be done. All leaders contribute to the evaluation of the impact of actions on a regular basis.

The recently appointed pastoral worker is working closely with families and individual pupils. This has led to some good improvements in attendance for some, although there is still some work to do to bring the proportion of pupils who are away from school too often in line with national figures.

Governors are acting on the outcomes of the review of governance that was carried out in July. Link governors are working with senior leaders to increase their understanding of subjects and of how pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are supported by the pupil premium are learning and progressing. Governors have also spent a good deal of time learning about the assessment information that is provided for them. Because their understanding has deepened, they are able to ask pertinent and challenging questions of the school's leaders. However, the provision of detailed information does not help them get quickly to the heart of the matters under discussion, or help them develop a strategic overview of the impact of the school's actions.

The review of the school's pupil premium spending was carried out at the start of this academic year. You have not, as yet, received the written outcomes from the review.

### **External support**

The local authority's link officer visits the school regularly to provide support and to check on the progress that is being made. The local authority rightly judges that the school is well placed to continue to improve without a high degree of external support. A project board meets regularly to review progress and to hold the school's leaders and governors to account. The local authority undertook the review of the governing body's effectiveness and provided clear feedback that has helped the governing body to refine and develop its procedures.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**