

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 December 2016

Mr Paul Stock
Headteacher
Rushmere Hall Primary School
Lanark Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP4 3EJ

Dear Mr Stock

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rushmere Hall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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.

The visit was the second 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.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school improvement plan has clear measures of success for achieving good outcomes for pupils
- ensure a systematic and consistently strong approach to the teaching of phonics
- provide good resources for the teaching of information technology.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the five phase leaders to discuss the actions taken since the previous monitoring inspection. The school development plan was evaluated. Together with you and the deputy headteacher, I visited classrooms and looked at pupils' books and the work on display. I was in school for half a day.

Context

The two interim headteachers in post at the first monitoring inspection continued, as planned, to lead the school up to the end of the summer term 2016. You took on the headship from September 2016. At the same time, as planned, the vice-chair of the governing body took on the role of chair. The ex-chair continues as a governor. A fifth-phase leader joined the team of middle leaders from September 2016.

Main findings

Staff morale is high. The interim headteachers did a good job in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes and staff are ready for the next period of development, under your leadership. Your energy and enthusiasm are very evident, and your professionally critical eye is welcomed by staff.

The new school development plan brings renewed urgency to improve teaching and learning. Senior leaders, phase leaders and governors contributed to the plan and are enthusiastic about how well the plan helps them to fulfil their responsibilities. They use the plan continuously to inform their work. The time given each week to phase leaders to carry out the actions in the plan, including the formal weekly meetings with you, work well to ensure that staff at all levels of responsibility know what they are expected to do and achieve. The senior team hold them to account for how well pupils achieve as a result. Although the plan makes actions and responsibilities clear, the milestones and measures for assessing how well pupils are doing as a result of the actions taken are not clear enough.

The work in books and on display shows that pupils take pride in their work, have good opportunities to write long pieces of text and set out their mathematical calculations well. Staff are methodical and consistent in using the agreed approach of learning objectives to set the scene for learning. The steps used to check what is learned are often not clear or logical enough to be helpful to pupils. Your checks on teaching and learning, and the scrutiny of work during this inspection, show that, in some year groups, teaching and pupils' work is better in some classes than others.

The good work already started at the first monitoring inspection to make best use of support staff continues. There is still work to do so that all support is as effective as it can be, but the difference on pupils is clear. Pupils who need extra support now almost always learn alongside others in the classroom.

Overall, pupils' progress, particularly by the end of the Reception Year and Year 6, is improving. Most pupils make the progress expected for their age or starting points. The senior team have accurately identified the following weaker areas of pupils' attainment and progress:

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not make as much progress as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The progress of pupils attracting additional funding through the pupil premium is not improving rapidly enough, particularly in phonics. Mindful that they are lagging behind, you have set up a new approach to the additional support for the disadvantaged pupils. The new approach is firmly grounded in good practice, focusing on addressing the needs of individual pupils and thinking creatively about what will make the difference. It is too early to know how well the new initiative works but it is clear that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has high priority.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls and this difference is a priority in the development plan.
- Pupils' phonic skills are not consistently good. The teaching approach is not systematic enough and there are too many variations in how the phonics scheme is used.

The good investment in resources seen at the first monitoring inspection continues. Additional literature texts for English teaching, library books and mathematics equipment provide pupils with good-quality resources. Pupils have good opportunities to choose from a range of mathematical resources to support their learning. Improving resources for science teaching is currently under way. There are not enough computers or laptops to support good-quality teaching and learning of information technology.

Governors now take on additional responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. The child protection policy was reviewed earlier this term and is on the school's website. The policy sets out suitable arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

External support

External support was not evaluated at this monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector