

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 January 2017

Mr Jim Balmbra
Headteacher
Meadowside Primary School and Children's Centre
Park Road
Burton Latimer
Kettering
NN15 5QY

Dear Mr Balmbra

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Meadowside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 that 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 March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection, in order to become a good school.

This school should take further action to:

- Develop the role of leaders of subjects so that they are using the information gathered from monitoring to inform the support to teachers so that they improve their practice.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the chair of the governing body as well as two other governors. I had a discussion by telephone with the representative of the local authority. We visited all classrooms briefly. I looked at

safeguarding records, which contained a number of administrative errors; however these were resolved before the end of the visit. I looked at the school's most recent data on pupils' achievement, and evaluated the latest version of the school improvement and development plans. I had a discussion with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' books.

Context

The school is an above-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and, therefore, supported through the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by education, health and care plans is below average.

There are two new subject leaders of English and two other new teachers who have been appointed to work at the school from September 2016. One of them is a newly qualified teacher. A review of governance took place in the summer term. The majority of the governors are new to the governing body since the beginning of the autumn term and there is a new chair.

Main findings

The impact of your work in tackling the areas that were identified for improvement at your most recent section 5 inspection has been inconsistent. Plans for school improvement reflect the areas identified in the previous inspection. However, these plans do not have sufficient detail to hold leaders to account. As a result, change has not been rapid enough to meet the needs of the school. Milestones to meet the areas for improvement lack urgency and checks on improvements are not regular enough.

The governing body has responded promptly to dealing with the school's underachievement through a comprehensive improvement plan. There is a new chair of the governing body, which has recently been reconstituted, who is committed to raising levels of pupil achievement. He has effectively managed the appointment of new governors to meet the needs of the school.

The governing body has actively sought advice from the local authority to support the governor planning process as well as utilising the expertise of a national leader of governance. Governors meet subject leaders regularly so that they have a precise understanding of the impact of subject leaders' actions on pupil outcomes. They understand their role and the importance of challenging leaders to ensure that there

is sustained improvement in pupil achievement. Governors are determined to improve pupils' outcomes.

Subject leaders lack urgency in their approach to raising pupil achievement. They do not use their dedicated time for subject leadership in a purposeful way so that it improves pupil outcomes. Consequently, subject leaders are not precise enough about the improvements needing to be made by teachers in the classroom to affect pupils' progress. Subject leaders have focused their efforts on delivering training to staff but have not yet checked if this is having an impact on pupil outcomes. They have introduced additional activities to support pupils to make progress in mathematics. It is too early to state whether these activities are having an impact.

Subject leaders are not using information from their checks on teaching to determine how they are going to drive improvements in their area of responsibility. In recent times, they have become more knowledgeable about pupil assessment information through discussions about pupils' progress at formal meetings with class teachers. Based on these meetings, subject leaders are developing a deeper knowledge of pupil achievement across the school.

You and your staff are at the early stages of using a new school tracking system that monitors pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers are not yet using the pupil assessment information incisively enough to inform next steps in learning. Consequently, work planned for pupils is not challenging enough, or is too difficult for them, based on their prior knowledge or skills.

Teachers do not check pupils' learning closely enough to ensure that they make the progress in mathematics of which they are capable. Pupils' misconceptions remain unchecked and their learning is hampered. Where teaching and learning is more secure, teachers readily adjust pupils' misconceptions and ensure that they understand the task.

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

External support

You have benefited from a well-conceived programme of support from the local authority, where the school's progress is being kept under review. You and your staff have joined the Inspire Teaching and Learning Alliance where you access a comprehensive package of support. This is helping to develop the subject knowledge of teachers. Nevertheless, the support for subject leaders is not yet having a positive impact in helping them to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility. You also have regular peer reviews from another headteacher within the Inspire Teaching and

Learning Alliance. Your newly qualified teacher receives support and training from Northampton Town and County Teaching School Alliance. The governing body receives support from a national leader of governance to support and strengthen the newly formed governing body.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of children's services for Northamptonshire, the regional schools commissioner and the director of education for Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall

Her Majesty's Inspector