

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 February 2017

Ms Patsy Weighill
Bilton School
Lawford Lane
Bilton
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV22 7JT

Dear Ms Weighill

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bilton School

Following my visit with Natasha Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector, and Patrick Amieli, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 24–25 January 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2016. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I would ask that I am informed of any decisions that may result in the appointment of newly qualified teachers before the next 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 Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2016.

- Improve teaching so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most-able pupils, make good progress from their starting points in all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons that are well matched to what pupils already understand, know and can do, so that pupils of all abilities are challenged to think deeply and work hard
 - check on pupils' progress during lesson so that they can give pupils additional help or extra challenge when it is needed
 - plan activities and use resources in lessons that support pupils who cannot read well.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and consistently implement the school's behaviour policy
 - leaders provide effective support for staff in managing challenging behaviour.
- Urgently reduce the prevalence of bullying in Key Stages 3 and 4 by ensuring that:
 - pupils understand that bullying is unacceptable
 - systems to report, investigate and deal with bullying are effective and command the confidence of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels so that there is rapid improvement in the achievement of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, by ensuring that:
 - all leaders have a correct view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based upon regular and accurate evaluations of progress, teaching and behaviour
 - governors have the knowledge and skills that mean they have an accurate view of the school's performance and are able to hold leaders properly to account
 - training for individual teachers is based on an accurate evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses and is targeted to have maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes
 - teachers are able to make accurate assessments of their pupils' attainment

- the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils rapidly
- the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, especially those with weak basic skills and the most able
- middle leaders have the skills and capacity to improve teaching and raise standards in their subjects
- the mathematics department is well led and fully staffed
- there is a whole-school focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy, and especially reading.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 24 to 25 January 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons across a range of subjects in key stages 3, 4 and 5. Subject leaders accompanied inspectors for some of these observations. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, spoke to them about their learning and observed behaviour in lessons. An inspector met formally with groups of pupils on three occasions.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, school leaders, including those who are responsible for safeguarding, and three members of the governing body. Views of parents were considered from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspectors evaluated a range of documents, including the school's analysis of current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Additional documentation was evaluated, such as information about how teachers' performance is managed, the school's self-evaluation plan and policies.

Context

There has been a period of stability in staffing since the last monitoring inspection in October 2016. An additional mathematics teacher has been appointed. The governing body's action plan monitoring review group (APMRG) continues to monitor and evaluate leaders' progress in response to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The APMRG ensures that other members of the governing body are kept fully informed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders continue to monitor the school using a wide range of evidence from a variety of sources. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information well to form strategic plans that prioritise areas to improve. Middle leaders contribute well to this process, through a clear, well-structured cycle of quality assurance. Regular dialogue between middle and senior leaders delivers clear information about where interventions need to take place to support pupils. When evaluating the school's effectiveness, leaders focus strongly on pupils' achievement, mindful of post-16 education or training opportunities. This is sometimes at the expense of considering pupils' progress when making judgements about the school's overall effectiveness.

Governors meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the progress leaders make in response to the areas for improvement identified at the inspection in February 2016. Governors use their high level of knowledge and expertise to ask questions that both support and challenge school leaders. At the time of the monitoring

inspection in October 2016, governors were less clear about how they would evaluate the impact of actions in the future. This was because success criteria in the school development plan were less detailed than in the past. No additional success criteria have been added to the development plan but members of the APMRG hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions by using the milestones available. They also ask questions about pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

Leaders of mathematics are now well established. They develop clear strategic plans in response to how well pupils are doing and accurate judgements about the impact teachers are having. Leaders ensure that teachers identify which topics Year 11 pupils need to prioritise, and plans are personalised for different groups. Teachers sharply focus their planning on the starting points of pupils in their groups, so tasks planned have an appropriate level of challenge. Additional teaching groups are planned as a result of enhanced staffing levels due to the appointment of an additional teacher.

Developing teachers' skills remains a key priority for leaders and a cohesive programme of training exists. Staff participate in training which is informed by, and responsive to, detailed analysis of the quality of teaching and ongoing school priorities. These sessions have had some success in developing a consistent approach to key aspects of teaching in the school, but more still needs to be done. Leaders should give more consideration to the impact of teaching on pupils' learning when identifying training needs in the future. Teachers also take part in sessions that respond to their individual development needs. Staff with particular strengths and expertise help their colleagues to develop these skills. Middle leaders' skills benefit from a course developed by fellow staff that includes an opportunity to have an impact across the school.

Leaders have carried out detailed analysis of the impact of the school's approach to developing literacy across the curriculum. They identify that, while not yet consistent, an increasing proportion of teachers successfully support pupils' literacy. Leaders' focus has widened to ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects. Although still at the early stages, this initiative aims to ensure that numeracy skills are developed in a consistent manner across the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures continue to be effective. Policies are updated and staff receive regular training updates. Appropriate checks on all adults who work with pupils are in place. The school site is secure and steps are taken to ensure pupils' safety. There is a culture that safeguarding is a high priority across the school. Staff have a clear understanding of potential risks to pupils and procedures to follow if they have any concerns. The school works with a range of agencies to support the needs of vulnerable pupils and keeps detailed and secure records of actions taken.

Pupils in all key stages say they feel safe in school and show a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online. However, key stage 4 pupils are less secure about how to keep themselves safe from possible risks of radicalisation and extremism than younger pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is improving, but the quality remains variable. Where teaching is effective, pupils learn successfully because teachers plan a variety of activities that meet their individual learning needs. Learning is clearly linked to examination criteria for older pupils. A positive learning climate in lessons exists because of strong positive relationships between pupils and their teachers. Teachers apply the school's literacy policy well, for example insisting on the use of key subject vocabulary and ensuring that pupils are aware of using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing.

However, teaching is not yet sufficiently consistent enough to ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not identify when pupils, particularly those with average prior attainment, are not actively involved in their learning. Consequently, teachers do not take steps to engage these pupils with their learning. This results in gaps in pupils' understanding and missed opportunities to practise and embed skills. Teachers do not take into account pupils' current knowledge or skills, so planned activities do not stretch and challenge pupils appropriately or provide them with sufficient support. This is particularly the case where classes contain pupils with a wide range of different starting points.

Teachers' use of the school's policy for marking work and providing feedback is inconsistent. When used effectively, pupils say that marking helps their learning. They value the comments they receive, and use time well to revisit work and make improvements. However, work is not always marked with the frequency leaders expect. In addition, some teachers do not ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to respond to the comments and targets they receive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders continue to embed behaviour and reward policies across the school. Pupils say that staff now apply these systems with more consistency and this has led to further improvements in behaviour in lessons. Pupils appreciate higher levels of supervision at social times. Older pupils say the ease with which they can now move around the school between classes has improved significantly.

Leaders now monitor conduct in more detail and carry out detailed analysis of incidents of poor behaviour, for example by different groups of pupils. Leaders' evaluation identifies that while most poor behaviour is of a low level, exclusion rates

remain too high. Leaders are taking actions to address this, but their full impact is yet to be seen.

Pupils demonstrate confidence and good humour while remaining courteous and respectful of one another and adults. They say very little bullying takes place at the school, which they attribute to the banning of mobile phones. Across all key stages, pupils remain supportive of this policy. They are confident that any bullying they report will be dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. The recording of bullying is robust and records show a concerted approach to address it.

Despite positive conduct, attitudes to learning remain a concern in some classes, particularly for middle- and lower-attaining pupils. Teachers do not identify and address the issue quickly enough when pupils are not fully engaged with their learning. This is especially the case when work is either too hard or too easy for pupils. As a result, pupils are not making the rapid progress which is necessary for them to reach their full potential.

Pupils' absence is addressed. Last year there was an overall improvement in attendance. Current analysis shows similar rates of attendance this year. Leaders track attendance rates and identify where actions need to be taken to improve the attendance. However, this work has not yet had an impact on improving attendance rates. As a result of absence from school, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders continue to collect information about pupils' progress regularly. The positive effect of actions to improve pupils' outcomes are demonstrated in analysis of some assessment information. Leaders' current forecasts identify improvements in rates of progress, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 9, compared with previous years. The effectiveness of leaders' actions for pupils currently in Year 11 are not as clearly demonstrated as for other year groups. However, this information reflects better alignment of school assessments with the new grade frameworks in English and mathematics.

There remain uneven progress rates for different groups of pupils and subjects. For example, disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 11 are making half a grade less progress than other pupils in their year. Relative to their starting points, the most able pupils are currently making half a grade less progress than pupils with low prior attainment. Also, progress within subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate is roughly half a grade lower than in other elements.

Leaders' thorough analysis identifies which pupils require additional support and interventions are planned as appropriate. For example, steps are being taken to personalise the curriculum for some Year 11 pupils and provide additional support in subjects where their progress is less secure. Leaders are confident that their actions

will accelerate progress and improve pupils' performance in forthcoming public examinations.

Information about younger pupils' literacy skills is used well to identify those who need to catch up. A range of effective support now has a proven track record of success. As a result, the pupils who benefit now have better access to other aspects of the curriculum.

In 2016, outcomes for students following 16–19 study programmes improved from the previous year. Students' progress in applied general qualifications was well above that of other students nationally and was similar in academic qualifications. Leaders' analysis of current students' performance indicates this success will continue this year.

External support

Leaders benefit by close working with colleagues from Southam College. The headteacher at Southam College visits Bilton regularly and analyses performance information. As a result, he has an accurate and realistic understanding of Bilton's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders affected by changes in national assessment systems benefit from developing their responses to these alterations with colleagues from Southam. There has been a positive impact of external support on leaders' capability and school processes. However, the impact of these actions is yet to be fully realised on pupils' outcomes.