

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 May 2017

Victoria Giliker
Harpur Hill Primary School
Trent Avenue
Harpur Hill
Buxton
Derbyshire
SK17 9LP

Dear Mrs Giliker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit of Harpur Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 April 2017, 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 September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in September 2016, 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

The school improvement plan was evaluated and, also, a number of documents relating to the school's performance, the safeguarding of pupils and pupils' progress

tracking information were reviewed. Together with you, I visited all classrooms and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Context

Since the last inspection, a number of teaching and non-teaching staff have left the school. It has not been possible to replace many of these positions immediately with permanent staff and this has resulted in some turbulence for a number of classes, particularly Years 3 and 4. A number of staff are currently on long-term sick leave. The school's leadership team is now complete, with a number of leaders, such as those for special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupil premium, being new to post. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding was completed in December 2016.

Main findings

Senior leaders have acted quickly in response to the findings of the school's last inspection. You have successfully shared your ambitious vision for the school and every pupil with governors, staff and other school leaders. The school's plans for improvement are well designed to promote and prioritise the actions necessary for the school to improve further. There are clear lines of accountability and milestones by which leaders can be held accountable for their actions.

The governing body has increased the level of accountability it expects from the school's leaders. Senior and subject leaders are invited to governing body meetings to share information about their areas of responsibility and the performance of groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged. Governors use these opportunities to gain a better understanding of the school's performance and this is helping them to ask increasingly searching questions of school leaders.

The senior and subject leaders' enthusiasm and appetite for their roles are tangible. They have a shared sense of purpose and a firm grasp of the responsibilities that come with their position. You have been successful in delegating these responsibilities and the leaders feel increasingly empowered and trusted to use their professional knowledge and judgement to secure improvements. The school's monitoring timetable is ensuring that the leaders check on the impact of classroom practice on pupils' work at regular intervals.

The school's pupils' progress tracking system is now well established. Leaders use this to hold teachers to account for the performance of every child. As a result of the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, the information on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils is particularly detailed. Leaders use this information effectively to plan, and check on, any additional support these pupils may receive.

Current information shows that, regardless of background or ability, the majority of

this group of pupils are making at least, and often much more than, the progress expected of pupils their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this tracking is not yet used as effectively as it needs to be by teachers to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.

Work in books shows that pupils are increasingly having opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills. In addition to mathematics lessons, pupils' learning journals show good evidence of mathematical skills being used in subjects such as geography and science. Teachers are providing pupils with more opportunities in their mathematics lessons to explain what they are doing and why, and this is helping to develop their reasoning skills.

Teachers give feedback to pupils in line with the school's revised policy. Additionally, pupils are encouraged to review their own work and that of their peers to support and deepen their understanding. Teachers' feedback does not yet consistently support the next steps in pupils' learning as it is often descriptive rather than developmental. Where teachers set additional tasks, some of which are thought-provoking, pupils are not given the time they need to reflect upon and complete these regularly enough.

External support

The school remains a priority for the local authority and receives additional support from a local schools' teaching alliance. This support has provided increased opportunities for leaders and teachers to visit other schools to view strong practice and moderate standards of pupils' work. The school's leaders speak highly of how this is helping to secure improvements at the school, as well as develop their teaching practice and that of their colleagues. In addition to brokering this support, the local authority has provided leaders with the financial and human resources expertise necessary to move the school forward at the brisk pace necessary to improve standards in the future.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector