

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 September 2017

Miss Nicole Fowles
Coleshill Heath School
Lime Grove
Chelmsley Wood
Birmingham
West Midlands
B37 7PY

Dear Miss Fowles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coleshill Heath School

Following my visit to your school on 20 July 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 June 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection that took place in February 2014, 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 recent inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure the effectiveness of the new leadership structure and make sure that action plans to raise standards have clear milestones against which leaders and governors can measure progress
- maximise the progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6, and of disadvantaged pupils across the school
- further develop the curriculum to engage all pupils, but especially boys

- further develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
- strengthen children's progress in the early years, especially for those who are disadvantaged, by adapting the curriculum to better meet the children's needs and make sure that children engage more readily with writing and mathematics tasks.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your two deputy headteachers, nine members of staff and two members of the governing body. I also held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. Discussions focused on the actions taken by leaders since the last inspection and their impact on pupils' achievements. I evaluated the school's improvement plans and a range of other documents, including evidence of monitoring activities, minutes of governors' meetings and subject action plans. Together, we walked around the school and I observed pupils' learning in short visits to a sample of lessons. I spoke informally to some pupils about their learning.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change to the staffing structure for support staff. You have employed two pastoral leads to support pupils who are disadvantaged. You plan to change the structure of the leadership team in September 2017.

Main findings

You have successfully addressed many of the long-standing issues faced by the school. The actions you, senior leaders and governors have taken focus on the right areas to bring about sustainable improvements in pupils' attainment. These actions are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes, although progress is not yet as rapid as it should be in all year groups. You have brought about a positive shift in the culture of the school and you have the confidence of staff, governors and the local authority who all recognise the constructive developments and the validity of future priorities. You are still overcoming gaps in pupils' knowledge as a result of previously poor teaching and low expectations. This is especially true for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and for pupils who are disadvantaged. Governors understand the need to ensure that the rate at which pupils make progress increases. They are becoming more rigorous in the challenge that they provide for you and other school leaders by increasingly seeking evidence from a range of sources to confirm the information that you give them.

The school's self-evaluation and subsequent action plans focus on the areas for improvement identified at the inspection in June 2016. These, along with additional

areas, such as mathematics and developing pupils' readiness to learn, are bringing about improved outcomes for pupils. You regularly collect information about pupils' attainment and you are increasingly confident about the accuracy of this information as a result of regular internal and external reviews. More accurate information about pupils' progress supports your plans for the increased accountability of middle and senior leaders through the school's new leadership structure, and the clarification of leaders' roles and responsibilities. All staff have a shared understanding of the school's priorities, and assessment information is widely understood. However, planning and your use of information could be simplified to ensure a focus on your key priorities, including clear criteria against which you and governors can measure the school's progress.

Since the last inspection, there has been an increased focus on staff development, including coaching and the sharing of effective practice. You have provided training both for teachers and for teaching assistants. Staff speak positively about improved communication, clearer line management, working as a team and increased accountability for pupils' progress. Teaching is improving across the school as the subject knowledge of staff increases. Your records indicate that there is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching across classes and year groups.

You and your team have raised the profile of reading, and all pupils now have regular access to the new library areas. You have changed the way that reading and phonics are taught across the school, and this is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils say that they enjoy reading more, and now read more often than they did in the past. During the inspection, pupils across the school were taking part in a reading festival to help encourage reading throughout the summer holidays.

Staff training has also led to improvements in the quality of mathematics teaching. You have focused on developing pupils' basic arithmetic skills and outcomes in tests of mental arithmetic are improving. Pupils are given regular opportunities to select their own level of challenge within lessons and this is helping to develop pupils' confidence as well as providing opportunities for the most able pupils to work at greater depth. Teachers now give pupils more timely and relevant feedback. However, pupils are not yet confident in applying their knowledge and understanding to solving a range of mathematical problems.

In the early years, you have improved the use of the outdoor learning environment and children now have access to writing and number activities when outdoors. However, more needs to be done to encourage the children to choose these options. You have identified the need to strengthen links between the Nursery and Reception classes and to adapt the curriculum to make it more relevant to the children's interests, especially the boys. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development in 2017 remains similar to the improved outcomes seen in 2016.

Your most recent assessment information shows improving rates of progress for the majority of pupils across the school, although this does vary between subjects and year groups. Disadvantaged pupils are making progress but, in a number of cases, they are not making as much progress as other pupils in school and some gaps in attainment have widened. However, you are now using your pupil premium funding in a more targeted way to address the needs of your disadvantaged pupils. For example, your new pastoral leaders support pupils' emotional health and well-being as well as their academic needs. This is improving pupils' attitudes to learning and starting to make a positive difference to their progress. Further increasing the rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils remains a key priority for all members of staff.

You are aware that across the school boys' outcomes are not as strong as the girls' outcomes. You and your team are addressing this by ensuring that there is a better distribution of resources across year groups, introducing the use of more physical resources, and reviewing the curriculum so that it is more relevant to pupils' interests. You are also trialling different approaches to teaching. For example, in Year 4, teachers have taught a literacy topic where boys and girls studied different texts. This is an area that you are planning to develop further. You have also taken steps to improve the effectiveness of the transition from one year group to the next. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are already well briefed about the needs of their new classes in readiness for the autumn term.

You have taken action to develop greater engagement with parents. For example, a web tool for communication gives parents immediate information about their children's achievements and progress. Parents are also increasingly involved in the school through a parent forum. The school has recently received a leading parent partnership award to recognise these developments.

External support

You receive effective assistance from a number of different sources. This support has been targeted at helping you to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. A collaborative of local Solihull schools provides effective support for you, other leaders, teachers and governors. There has been a clear emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards for all pupils. Leaders and governors have been supported through training and help with moderation. The local authority holds monthly challenge meetings with you, senior leaders and governors. These meetings hold you to account for developments and ensure that there is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and the next steps you need to take. Regular visits from the school's local authority adviser and a review of teaching and learning have provided an independent view of progress during the year. Improvements throughout the school demonstrate the positive impact of the support you have received. You have also achieved external accreditation for the high-quality professional learning you and your staff have undertaken.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector