

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 October 2017

Mrs Alison Darby
Kingsley Primary School
Taybrooke Avenue
Hartlepool
TS25 5JR

Dear Mrs Darby

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingsley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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.

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

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders, teaching assistants and members of the governing body, to discuss the actions being taken to improve the school since the last inspection. I toured the school with you to observe teaching and learning. I met a group of pupils to discuss their learning and any changes they had identified since the last inspection. I examined the school improvement plan, as well as other documents, including self-evaluation documents and governing body reports. I looked at work in pupils' books and folders and also looked at the school's new system for tracking pupils' progress.

Context

There have been no significant changes of context since the previous inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher and her senior leadership team have established a shared commitment to school improvement that has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection. Leaders have actively sought challenge and invited external partners to evaluate the effectiveness of their work. A core group of governors have supported this process through monthly meetings with school leaders where they have measured the impact of improvement activities. As a result, leaders now have a more accurate view of progress, and standards of accountability are much more rigorous. These actions have contributed to the improvement achieved in pupils' outcomes across all phases in 2017.

Leaders have worked with improvement partners to sharpen the school improvement plan. In many cases, targets for improvement are now more precise and this has helped leaders and governors to measure the impact of change. Leaders regularly monitor pupils' progress and this has led to more timely and effective adjustments to teaching and the provision of additional interventions to support pupils who are underachieving. Leaders have used the review of the use of the pupil premium funding to set more focused targets, with all teachers having specific goals for the progress of their disadvantaged pupils incorporated into their performance management targets for 2017/18. While there are some aspects of the school improvement plan that still lack detailed success criteria, the overall plan and associated monitoring activities have contributed to better teaching and stronger outcomes.

Leaders have continued to enhance the roles of teaching assistants through joint planning, shared assessment and well-tailored professional development activities. During my visit, teaching assistants described a range of professional development courses they had undertaken both at school and externally to improve their teaching and assessment practice. Their performance is regularly reviewed by phase leaders through the rigorous monitoring systems that leaders have established. In classrooms, teaching assistants plan alongside teachers to manage support and to assess the impact of their work on the development of pupils' skills and understanding. In lessons, teaching assistants deepen pupils' understanding through questions and prompts, although they do not consistently build pupils' skills to learn independently.

The actions of leaders, teachers and governors contributed to improving outcomes across all phases in 2017. At key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard substantially increased to levels above those seen nationally. At key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined rose to 80%, an increase of 36%. Further improvements were evident in the phonics screening check and in the proportion of

children achieving a good level of development in the early years foundation stage. Overall rates of progress at key stage 2 also improved to slightly above those seen nationally, although the proportion of pupils achieving at a greater depth of learning in reading remains lower than that seen nationally. Disadvantaged pupils made better rates of progress than in the previous year and differences in progress between them and other pupils nationally diminished, although differences in attainment remain.

Leaders and teachers have worked alongside local authority partners to strengthen their assessment of children's abilities on entry to Nursery and Reception. For example, during home visits with parents, children's early understanding of colours, numbers and shapes, along with information about their personal and emotional well-being, are noted. This information, together with stronger assessment, now inform planning and teaching in early years. This contributes to an increasing proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. Teachers and teaching assistants have also reviewed their phonics teaching. During my visit, there was evidence of effective modelling and reinforcement of key letter sounds in early years and at key stage 1. This is reflected in pupils' improved phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 in 2017.

In discussion with pupils, they all said that they enjoyed school and appreciated the 'loving and caring' environment. Levels of care and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remain extremely high. This conducive learning environment contributes well to the good level of attendance achieved overall; the attendance rate for all pupils and for key groups of pupils was above the national average figure in 2016/17.

Leaders have embraced school improvement in a positive and open manner. They are documenting the improvement journey in an assiduous manner and providing regular evidence to governors and improvement partners of the impact of their actions. External partners have verified leaders' judgements of standards, giving a renewed confidence to the improvement process. In order for the school to improve further, leaders need to ensure that pupils' skills and understanding in the wider curriculum are further enhanced. They also need to ensure that the newly commissioned assessment system is implemented smoothly, enabling teachers to closely monitor pupils' progress across year groups and phases.

External support

The school has worked closely with the school improvement partner to sharpen the school improvement plan and to ensure that improvement targets are now more measureable. Improvement partners and the local authority have worked closely with phase and subject leaders to verify leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Phase and subject leaders have taken part in regular

moderation meetings to check the accuracy of assessment. Leaders instigated a review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, and as a result, leaders monitor the impact of additional funding more closely. This has contributed to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector