

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Louise Bennett
Cam Woodfield Junior School
Elstub Lane
Woodfield
Dursley
Gloucestershire
GL11 6JJ

Dear Mrs Bennett

Special measures monitoring inspection of Cam Woodfield Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 10–11 October 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in January 2017.

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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in January 2017.

- Immediately improve the quality of safeguarding, and health and safety by making sure that:
 - all important information is easily accessible to those who need it
 - policies, procedures and risk assessments are fit for purpose by being up to date with the latest legislation and government guidance, known by all staff, and followed throughout the school
 - all records are complete, and fully demonstrate any actions taken by the school, with supportive evidence
 - staff safeguarding training is up to date and used to improve practice
 - governors check the monitoring of the school's safeguarding procedures effectively to be sure that all pupils are safe.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and based on clear evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do
 - teachers use the information they keep on pupils' learning and progress to plan work that is appropriately challenging and enables pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those receiving additional support, to make at least good progress.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - judgements about the work of the school and pupils' achievement are accurate, substantiated by reliable evidence and used to drive school improvement
 - middle leaders contribute effectively to the monitoring of pupils' progress, in particular by different groups, and use this information to improve pupils' outcomes
 - governors rigorously monitor the work of the school and robustly challenge information that they are given about the school's evaluation of its work.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 10 October 2017 to 11 October 2017

Evidence

During the inspection, the lead inspector observed pupils learning in a range of subjects and across all year groups. The lead inspector met the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and staff. A meeting was held with the two co-chairs of the governing body and one other governor. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with two local authority advisers who have been supporting the school. The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding. He spoke with pupils from the school council and informally with many other pupils and some parents.

Context

Following the previous inspection, the chair of the governing body stepped down from her role. Two co-chairs were subsequently elected to share the task of leading the governing body.

The school has received an academy order from the Department for Education.

The local authority set up a project group to coordinate support for the school. This group comprises local authority advisers, the co-chairs of the governing body, the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The project group is responsible for ensuring that the plan for improving the school and raising the attainment of pupils is effective.

The school is receiving support from the executive headteacher and headteacher of Coney Hill Community Primary School. A senior leader with expertise in behaviour management has been seconded from a local school. During the summer term the school received leadership support from the headteacher of Cam Woodfield Infants School which is based on the same site.

In July 2017, the headteacher resigned her post. Governors acted quickly to appoint an interim headteacher, working on a part-time secondment, from September 2017. The interim headteacher has recently been appointed as the full-time substantive headteacher of the school. She will take up this post in January 2018.

Several members of staff left the school at the end of the summer term. Four new teachers were recruited. They started working at the school in September 2017. Several new teaching assistants also took up their roles at that time.

The school added an extra class from the start of this academic year. Each year group, from Year 3 to Year 6, now has two classes of pupils.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders were slow to respond to the support that was offered to the school in the period following the inspection. Consequently, little progress was made to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, a new behaviour management system, introduced following expert advice, was not followed consistently by staff. Senior leaders were successful in bringing safeguarding policies and procedures up to date and ensuring that important information is more easily accessible. However, further work is necessary to ensure that actions taken by the school are documented fully and accurately.

The co-chairs of the governing body are both passionate about the school and have shown great determination to improve its leadership and management. They have played a crucial role in challenging senior leaders. By successfully filling teaching vacancies with suitably experienced staff, they have ensured that the school started this academic year with a full complement of teachers. Their swift action to secure an interim headteacher for September 2017 was particularly important.

Governors responded positively to the review of governance and the review of the use of pupil premium funding. The governing body has looked closely at its skills and has quickly undertaken training to improve areas of weakness. Although slightly smaller than previously, the governing body is dedicated and quickly becoming more skilful at questioning senior leaders. Their knowledge of the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress, for example, has improved sharply. Governors are very aware that pupils' achievements remain too low.

The new headteacher has acted quickly to begin putting in place the basic systems necessary for running a successful school. For example, systems to evaluate the performance of teachers have been established so that they are now aligned with pupils' progress. This is enabling senior leaders to monitor the effectiveness of teaching closely and provide support where it is required. Staff are following new guidance about the behaviour management system well. Although there are still some inconsistencies, pupils' behaviour is improving.

Senior leaders ensured that new teachers received effective induction when they joined the school in September. These teachers are clear about their roles as a result. Middle leaders briefed all teachers about expectations for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. They are aware that much more training is required in each of these subjects and they have credible plans to provide it. Senior leaders are now expecting more from the work of middle leaders. Consequently, even though their efforts to improve the quality of teaching are at an early stage, middle leaders are well motivated. Their morale is growing rapidly because they feel well led.

Senior leaders have taken steps to communicate better with parents. For example, one of the new headteacher's first actions was to invite all parents into school to

meet the teachers. All of the parents who spoke to the lead inspector were pleased with the recent changes to the leadership of the school. They expressed renewed confidence in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Training for teachers has started to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are using the agreed policy for providing feedback to pupils. Teachers are following the non-negotiable guidelines set down by senior leaders. As a result, their expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic standards have risen.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is becoming more accurate because middle leaders are introducing more checks on this. Teachers are beginning to share their judgements about pupils' progress and so better consistency is starting to be achieved. Teachers are using their assessment of pupils' work to plan more effective learning experiences for pupils. For example, teachers are identifying pupils' misconceptions quickly and so teaching assistants are able to help pupils to improve specific skills.

Senior leaders have provided training for teachers in using the electronic system for collecting and using information about pupils' progress. Regular meetings with teachers are used to ensure that pupils' individual needs are carefully planned for. Teachers now have a much greater focus on the progress of the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils. However, this system is in its infancy and so the progress of these pupils has not yet had time to rise significantly.

Teaching of reading is structured effectively so that all pupils are taught specific skills such as inference or comprehension of text. Teachers' skills are improving as a result of training in different approaches to reading. However, some pupils' reading skills remain weak because they lack the basic phonic knowledge that fluent reading is built on.

Teachers are giving pupils much more daily experience of writing. Pupils are becoming more adept at editing their work to improve it. Consequently, pupils' writing skills are developing at a faster rate. Teachers have been given training in the use of new techniques for teaching mathematics and a consistent approach is being followed. However, some pupils, particularly girls, are not yet confident when faced with mathematical problem-solving tasks involving several steps.

Although many of the outside areas of the school are bland and uninviting, many classrooms are interesting and imaginative places for pupils to work in. However, teachers' skills in developing the learning environment of their classrooms vary considerably.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally attentive. Attitudes to learning are improving and pupils are increasingly keen to learn. Pupils are able to talk to adults confidently and express themselves clearly. They respect the new behaviour management system and recognise that it is helping the majority of pupils to improve their concentration. Senior leaders are required to intervene in incidents of poor behaviour far less often as a result. A small minority of pupils still have difficulty in moderating their behaviour.

Pupils arrive at school calmly and move around the site sensibly. Teachers have placed a greater emphasis on the 'golden rules' and so pupils are more aware of the standard of social behaviour expected of them. Pupils play together respectfully and with good humour at playtime and lunchtime because staff supervise visibly and actively.

Many pupils are enthused about their learning. Year 3 pupils spoke to the lead inspector excitedly about encountering a famous author recently while visiting a festival of children's literature. However, some pupils, particularly boys, are not yet able to see the purpose of their learning and consequently are not as engaged by their work. This is particularly the case where teachers' planning is not effective.

Pupils' rates of attendance and punctuality are improving. Senior staff are more visible as pupils arrive for school. All staff actively welcome parents and pupils in the morning. Teachers liaise closely with parents where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is a particular focus. Specialist teaching assistants are able to offer support to pupils who are experiencing emotional or social problems. This makes a contribution to the improving rate of attendance.

Pupils are well looked after and enjoy school. They have confidence in their teachers to provide help if they experience problems. However, some pupils, particularly in Years 4 and 5, said they would like more chance to have responsibility in school. They, rightly, feel they have more to offer.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils' progress in reading in 2017 was well below the national average. A refreshed approach to the planning of reading sessions in class is leading to some improvement in pupils' reading ability. The new approach has not had time to take full effect, and so pupils' reading skills remain weak even though improving. Many pupils are able to speak about their favourite types of books. They can describe confidently the book they are currently reading at home, but pupils' reading needs to be developed further.

The progress of pupils in writing was below average last year. The initiatives to

improve the quality of pupils' writing are, like other aspects of the school's work, showing early signs of improvement. Current pupils' work shows an increasing sophistication in sentence structure. However, younger pupils' handwriting and letter formation skills are not well developed.

In 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics was in line with the national average. Current pupils' work shows that pupils' achievement is rising. Teachers have been given training in mathematics teaching. Consequently, they are able to identify precisely the skills they are expecting pupils to master. Teachers share ideas and techniques readily and so the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics is improving.

Disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress because teachers keep a closer check on how well they are doing and provide extra help and support when required. The overall strategy to support disadvantaged pupils is being developed and so efforts to support them are not yet fully evaluated. Many of the most able pupils currently in the school are on track to reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, based on their current progress, few of the most able pupils are likely to attain at a greater depth of understanding by the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils are benefiting from improvements to teaching. However, they are not yet making the rapid progress required to extend their learning beyond the expected standard.

External support

The local authority project group has coordinated efforts to improve the leadership and management of the school well. For example, securing leadership support from the headteacher of Cam Woodfield Infants School on a temporary basis provided much-needed stability in the short term. In the first six months of the project group's work, though, initiatives were slow to take root in the school. Senior leaders did not have the capacity to act on the advice being given. Time was lost because senior leaders did not work as a cohesive team. In contrast, since September 2017, the progress of improvement has increased considerably. Many staff are new to the school and the new headteacher has instilled a strong sense of purpose among them.

The executive headteacher and headteacher of Coney Hill Community Primary School have provided high-quality coaching and advice. This support is now beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved since the start of this academic year. The groundwork provided by the senior leader with expertise in behaviour management, is beginning to show results.