

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr John Gadd
Headteacher
Thomas A Becket Junior School
Glebeside Avenue
Worthing
BN14 7PR

Dear Mr Gadd

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thomas A Becket Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress were reviewed. Leaders and I visited a range of classrooms where I spoke to teachers and pupils. I evaluated a wide range of work in pupils' books. I met with a representative of the local authority and reviewed their evaluations of the school's progress. I met representatives of the governing body.

Context

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staff. Almost half of the 23 teachers have joined the school since the last inspection. Last year, the

school's leadership and management were restructured. As a result, the school now has two assistant headteachers with responsibility for upper and lower key stage 2.

Main findings

Leaders have a clear and accurate view of where teaching and learning are consistently strong and where teachers need additional support. Since the last inspection, leaders have significantly increased their presence in the classrooms and their oversight of pupils' progress. Consequently, leaders have been able to provide effective coaching and training opportunities to better support teachers, including those who are newly qualified. Teachers feel well supported. They now have good subject knowledge and feel more confident to teach, including the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Standards are improving. In July 2017, a greater proportion than that nationally of Year 6 pupils reached the expected standards in reading and mathematics. Although more Year 6 pupils reached expected standards in writing in July 2017 compared with 2016, standards in writing remained low.

Current pupils are making more consistent progress in English and mathematics than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers use assessment information well to identify those pupils who are falling behind. These pupils feel well supported and make good progress. The most able pupils are also making better progress. They feel that the level of challenge is 'just right' in their lessons. Leaders' actions to improve teachers' knowledge regarding mathematics are having a positive impact. Pupils now get a rich range of problems to think about and solve and are becoming more adept at offering sound mathematical reasons for their answers.

Leaders and teachers are working to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Work in pupils' books shows that this work is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in writing. Teachers have consistent expectations of pupils and therefore expectations of pupils' written work in other subjects across the curriculum are as high as they are for their English work. Pupils develop a wide and rich vocabulary and this has a positive impact on both their creative writing and their ability to infer meaning in what they read.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Long-standing governors are able to reflect on both historic shortcomings and current strengths. The governing body has been strengthened by strategic recruitment of individuals with specific knowledge and skills. The local authority has provided effective training to ensure that governors, including those who are new, are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Governors now know the strengths and development points within the school very well. They make good use of external reports to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

External support

The local authority provides extensive and effective support to the school. Leaders and governors value the time and resources that the local authority has provided. Last academic year, a seconded additional leader provided strong support for teachers that were not consistently effective. Consequently, teaching and pupils' learning improved. The local authority has provided expertise in the assessment of writing. This work has ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and that pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are a whole-school focus. The headteacher has been well supported by a national leader of education. All leaders recognise that they are now much more focused on teaching and learning, have established clear 'non-negotiables' with staff and check rigorously as to what is happening in the classrooms. Local authority reviews of the effectiveness of the school are comprehensive. As a result, it can accurately identify the improvements leaders have made since the last inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole
Her Majesty's Inspector