

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



11 July 2018

Mrs Cristina Marinoni  
Acting Headteacher  
Bearwood Primary School  
Bearwood Road  
Sindlesham  
Wokingham  
Berkshire  
RG41 5BB

Dear Mrs Marinoni

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bearwood Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 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, I met with you and another senior leader. I also met with members of the governing body and a local authority representative. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised other documents, including information about pupils' achievement, curriculum plans and governance. You and I made short visits to five lessons to look at the impact of leaders' work to improve teaching. We also listened to some most-able pupils reading.

## **Context**

The headteacher has been on long-term leave since September 2017. You stepped in as acting headteacher, moving up from your role as deputy headteacher. The acting deputy headteacher was also long-term absent and left at the end of the spring term 2018. An interim senior leader joined the school in late January 2018, taking over some of the responsibilities held by the acting deputy headteacher. A new chair of governors came in to the role in July 2017. Most governors are relatively new. The number of places in each year group is increasing from 40 to 45 in September 2018. Class sizes will be reduced from 40 to 30.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked effectively to improve teaching in mathematics. Initially, some other matters for attention were not picked up so well. Since taking up your current post, you have notably quickened the pace of change, working unstintingly to improve the school. As well as addressing issues identified at the last inspection, you have uncovered further matters of concern and ensured that these are tackled. The school is being transformed and is well on the way to becoming a good school.

During our visits to lessons, we saw how problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics are now everyday practice. Pupils willingly apply themselves to suitably challenging problems and are encouraged to think through and explain their reasoning. Improvements in the quality of assessment information are helping teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and plan tasks of suitable challenge to address these. Published and school information shows that pupils, including the most able, typically make good progress in mathematics. Nevertheless, during our visits to lessons we saw a few pupils undertaking work which did not build well enough on previous learning. You reflected that further work is needed to ensure that teachers consistently set work that takes account of what pupils already know.

Work to develop subject leadership is also bringing improvements. Middle leaders are taking on more responsibility for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. Teachers now have clearer information about what should be taught in different subjects to ensure good progress. Leaders' regular checks on the quality of planning help ensure suitable subject coverage and expectations. You know the importance of building further on this work so leaders can secure effective teaching across the curriculum.

Levels of persistent absence increased notably in 2017. A sizeable group of disadvantaged pupils had poor attendance. Rightly, you have introduced a tighter approach to managing attendance issues. You have improved communication with pupils, parents and carers about the importance of good attendance. Leaders and staff now routinely and swiftly challenge absence that occurs without justifiable reason. Increased support is provided to help pupils get to school. As a result,

pupils with a poor attendance record are attending more often than was previously the case. You know continued action is needed to ensure that these pupils attend consistently well.

A few parents have reservations about the extent to which leaders manage behaviour effectively. You explained how school systems were previously not tight enough to enable incidents of challenging behaviour to be resolved consistently swiftly. This resulted in some loss of parental confidence. Wisely, you have reworked the behaviour policy to ensure that behaviour concerns are dealt with quickly. Typically, pupils' behaviour is good. You recognise a few parents are yet to be convinced.

Governance has developed considerably in the last year. The governing body holds school leaders to account with increasing effectiveness. Governors now have at hand the information needed to do this. A clear school development plan and subject leader plans are useful tools for tracking the success of leaders' actions. An easy-to-understand 'data report' gives governors a sharp understanding of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The chair of the governing body has made sure newly recruited governors bring skills which strengthen the governing body. Governors have had useful training, including in understanding and using performance information, to ensure that they fulfil their roles effectively.

### **External support**

The school has benefited from a wealth of helpful external support. A local authority officer has worked closely with you, supporting leadership development and monitoring and providing training for staff. The local-authority-led school improvement board keeps a clear oversight of the effectiveness of work to improve the school. You have wisely re-engaged the school with the wider education community. The school's involvement with a 'cluster' group of local schools has enabled you to tap into a range of useful support. An experienced governor from another local school has provided helpful assistance for the governing body. A safeguarding audit carried out with the help of a local school brought several matters for attention to light, enabling you to deal with these effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Ofsted Inspector**