

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 February 2019

Kate Whitford
Head of School
Padstow School
Grenville Road
Padstow
Cornwall
PL28 8EX

Dear Mrs Whitford

Special measures monitoring inspection of Padstow School

Following my visit with Gary Chown, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 5 to 6 February 2019, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2017. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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 school's action plan is fit for purpose. However, plans would benefit from specific timescales and more precise success criteria so that those responsible for governance are better able to evaluate actions to raise standards.

Having considered all the evidence I recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi-academy trust, the regional school's commissioner

and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- An external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - evaluations of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are accurate
 - those responsible for governance at all levels hold school leaders to account for improving the school
 - those responsible for governance check the accuracy of the information they receive about the school's performance and make sure that actions bring about the rapid improvement.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - make accurate assessments of how well pupils are developing their skills and understanding
 - use assessments effectively to ensure that teaching and learning build on what pupils already know, can do and understand and so enable them to make rapid progress
 - provide teaching and learning that motivate and challenge pupils to engage fully in their work and become resilient, effective learners
 - check that all pupils understand the guidance they receive and heed this advice
 - fully support children in the early years to develop their learning in mathematics and writing.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment throughout the school by:
 - making sure that all pupils across the range of abilities and starting points make at least good progress
 - addressing shortcomings in pupils' arithmetical knowledge and developing pupils' ability to reason mathematically and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - improving pupils' reading skills by encouraging them to more readily use and apply their phonics understanding when tackling new words
 - further developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 5 February 2019 to 6 February 2019

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of school, the school's strategic partner and other leaders, including the school's leader of special educational needs. Discussions were held with pupils and parents.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the trust has further strengthened the governance of the school. Trust leaders have refined the trust's scheme of delegation, roles and responsibilities so that leaders at all levels are clear about what they are accountable for and to whom they are accountable. Leaders have appointed a new Year 5 teacher, who holds responsibility for the leadership of mathematics in the school. The teaching team is more stable. There are long-term temporary staff in place to cover the two long-term staff absences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The board and trust-wide leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They continue to hold senior leaders to account for the progress that pupils make and have increasingly high expectations. Hub councillors and the Academy Improvement Group (AIG) receive information from leaders and conduct their own monitoring and evaluation activities. As a result, they have confidence in leaders' ability to improve the quality of education.

The external review of the school's expenditure of pupil premium has now taken place. Leaders have started to implement measures to ensure that teachers remove barriers to learning for this group of pupils. This work is developing. There is more to be done to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils make good progress to reach the higher standard.

Staff morale is good and much improved. The head of school has been successful in implementing a thorough approach to supporting teachers. She provides clear advice and guidance. In particular, her work to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can do has meant that more pupils are working at the standards expected for their age than previously. Nonetheless, the legacy of weak teaching remains across the school.

The pace of improvement has gathered momentum. For example, leaders have embedded their strategy for mathematics so that there is a more consistent approach in the teaching of mathematics. Both the appointment of a middle leader for mathematics, and work from trust leaders, have strengthened teaching in this

area. Teachers are now much clearer about what pupils in their year groups should know, understand and be able to do. Pupils apply their mathematical reasoning to solve problems effectively. However, lack of fluency in applying their knowledge of number facts remains a barrier in some year groups.

Leaders have been highly successful in training support staff. Teaching assistants are skilled and provide high-quality support for pupils. The additional support these adults provide is helping to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders are acutely aware that the school's curriculum beyond English and mathematics needs an overhaul. The head of school has provided teachers with the necessary national curriculum guidance so that teachers 'cover' the necessary subject knowledge. Leaders recognise that this work is embryonic and that more needs to be done to ensure that teachers have clear expectations of what pupils should know and understand by the end of each unit of work.

Most of the parents inspectors spoke to during the two days were highly positive about the school's improved communication and the stability of staffing. Most parents told inspectors that their children were happier and learning more. They appreciated the swift start to the day and the increased focus on pupils' reading.

The leader for special educational needs has made teachers aware of their responsibilities to plan and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is now better placed to identify pupils' needs and, in some year groups, pupils thrive. However, inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and support that pupils with SEND receive. A few parents told us that staff communication about their child's needs could still improve. Inspectors agree that, though there has been some improvement, there is still more to do. This will be a focus for my next visit.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders continue to work with teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching staff are increasingly confident when assessing what pupils know, understand and can do in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the use of assessment in classes to plan and adapt learning to meet pupils' needs is still not the norm. As a result, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged sufficiently. Similarly, pupils with previously lower-than-average attainment continue to struggle.

For those pupils who are furthest behind in mathematics and writing, staff have been forensic in their analysis of the aspects that pupils have either missed or not grasped. Additional teaching sessions have been arranged to help pupils catch up. These sessions are highly effective because leaders have ensured that the staff who are leading these sessions have received the training they need.

Teachers have been successful in improving pupils' ability to read with understanding. Leaders have insisted on teachers using high-quality texts and that teachers read to pupils at least daily. Pupils' writing reflects their wide reading. They apply the new vocabulary they learn well, when they write descriptively. However, work to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is not firmly established across the school. Pupils' writing suffers as a result.

In the Reception class, the outdoor learning environment and the internal spaces allow for a range of activities to be organised in a stimulating and effective way. Children settle quickly to activities and sustain their concentration well. A wide variety of resources are available to the pupils to engage in the different areas of the early years curriculum. However, as with other year groups in the school, teachers' assessment in the Reception class is not used to plan future learning in a way that ensures that children build on what they already know, can do and understand. The most able children are not always sufficiently challenged in writing and number.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils continue to have a clear understanding of bullying and most recognise the difference between bullying and the occasional unkind behaviours that some pupils show. Pupils spoke confidently to one inspector about how to keep themselves safe. They talk openly about whom they can speak to if there is a problem, and they feel confident that issues will be dealt with. Most pupils say that behaviour is much better and that the school environment is calmer. Pupils move safely and sensibly around the school.

The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is effective. There are fewer incidents of poor behaviour. In most classes, pupils generally respond well to teachers' clear expectations, praise and encouragement. A few pupils still struggle to sustain their concentration in class. Teaching staff are not always attentive to this, and so pupils' behaviour deteriorates. However, this is unusual. Whereas previously some pupils had very poor attitudes towards their learning, better teaching is now developing motivated and interested pupils who are keen to learn. In most year groups, pupils' work in books shows that pupils are taking a greater pride in their work.

Pupils' overall attendance remains too low and below the national average. Leaders do not take a strong enough stance on pupils' absence. Too many parents take their children on holidays during term time. In addition, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are persistently absent from school. Although leaders have implemented a rigorous approach to checking the welfare of these pupils, more needs to be done to encourage better attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

More pupils are working at the standards expected for their age than previously. In particular, standards in reading and mathematics are rising.

The proportion of pupils who left the Reception class last year ready for Year 1 was similar to the national average. This was an improvement on previous years. However, given that many children join the Reception class with skills and understanding at least typical for their age, few children make good progress and excel in meeting their early learning goals.

In the 2018 phonics check, more children in Year 1 met the expected standards than in 2017. Now in Year 2, these pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of phonics when reading. However, the same pupils' writing books do not reflect a good grasp of phonics. Current Year 1 pupils' books reflect a more positive picture, with pupils using their sound knowledge to spell with increasing accuracy.

Pupils' attainment in the key stage 1 tests in 2018 remained low. Too few pupils made the necessary progress to reach the expected standards. Work in current books shows that these pupils, currently in Year 3, are beginning to catch up, particularly in mathematics.

There was significant improvement in the standards reached at the end of Year 6 in 2018. The number of pupils ready for secondary education was 4% lower than the national average (compared to a gap of 24% the previous year). Teaching in Year 6 is helping pupils to catch up. Current pupils are working at higher standards. Effective teaching is beginning to eliminate gaps in pupils' learning, though the legacy of past weak teaching has not yet been fully overcome.

There is not yet a consistent picture of expectations across all year groups about what is expected from different groups of pupils and what they are able to achieve. In some classes, staff do not give sufficient consideration to what pupils already know and understand. Pupils' writing continues to be marred by inaccurate spelling and grammar, although this is less evident in Years 5 and 6.

External support

School leaders have engaged willingly with support from both within and outside the trust. Work with the Devon and Cornwall Mathematics Hub has been particularly successful in raising standards. Similarly, work with a Cornwall Teaching School has raised leaders understanding of effective strategies to maximise the impact of the expenditure of pupil premium funding.