

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Suzanne Cooper
Brunel Primary & Nursery Academy
Callington Road
Saltash
Cornwall
PL12 6DX

Dear Mrs Cooper

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brunel Primary & Nursery Academy

Following my visit with Jennifer Gibbs, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and Lydia Pride, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 and 6 May 2021, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Bridge Multi-Academy Trust, the regional

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 5 and 6 May 2021

Context

This was the third monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in November 2018. The executive headteacher works one day a week at the school. The assistant headteacher has been appointed as leader for the pupil premium across the trust. The English leader and the deputy leader for phonics have been appointed to lead on English and phonics respectively across the trust. The number of pupils on the school's roll has decreased since 2019.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Leaders, including governors, are driving effective improvement across the school. Their vision for pupils to succeed academically, socially and emotionally is shared by all staff. School and trust leaders and governors have worked closely to embed and monitor the impact of training and coaching in all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, the quality of the phonics, English and mathematics curriculums has improved. The introduction of better-quality training and support is strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and the design of the curriculum in other subjects such as French, science and geography. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the development of other subjects in the rest of the curriculum. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support of school and trust leaders in managing their workload. They say how proud they are to work at the school.

Leaders have established an effective early reading programme. Pupils make strong links between sounds and the letters they represent. Staff have used pupils' assessment information well to identify gaps in their early reading. They have adapted the programme to ensure that pupils learn to read confidently and successfully. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge of letters and words to their writing well. They read books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. They are enthusiastic about reading and talk animatedly about the stories they read.

Leaders have begun to address gaps in pupils' vocabulary; however, this aspect of their work is in its infancy. The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the impact of leaders' work to widen pupils' knowledge of language. While each subject area focuses on the words that pupils need to know to be able to read, write and talk about the subject successfully, this has not yet been fully implemented. Consequently, gaps in some pupils' vocabulary hinder their understanding of texts.

Pupils study a well-sequenced mathematics curriculum. It enables pupils to review and revise prior learning before moving on to more complex concepts. For example, Year 4 pupils were observed revising their knowledge of place value before moving on to money problems. Staff use assessment effectively to adapt planning and support pupils' learning. Leaders acknowledge, however, that the curriculum does

not deepen pupils' knowledge to enable them to apply their understanding independently in a range of contexts.

Leaders have established a well-organised English curriculum. Pupils read and write about a range of texts in every year group. They learn to select words and sentences skilfully to suit the audience, purpose and text type they are writing for. Leaders have rightly identified the need to further strengthen the teaching and learning of spelling and punctuation across the school. There is a strong focus on handwriting and pupils' work is well presented. Pupils are proud of their work. However, a small number of pupils in key stage 1 and children in early years do not form their letters and numbers well. Leaders have prioritised additional support for these pupils.

Leaders, in collaboration with the trust, have improved the design of curriculum subjects such as French, science and geography. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the implementation of these programmes. In some subject areas such as history, leaders acknowledge that the curriculum is not as well organised. Although the curriculum outlines the ways in which pupils learn how to study history, it does not detail what they will learn in depth and remains unclear how pupils will make progress through the history curriculum.

Leaders and staff have organised the outdoor and indoor areas in Nursery and Reception skilfully. Children in Nursery are well prepared for learning in Reception. Children have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the world. For example, Reception children were observed watching a nest of blue tits with great concentration, then writing lists of names for the birds. The well structured activities enable children in Nursery and Reception to develop their knowledge of number, reading and writing. In light of the current circumstances, leaders have adapted the phonics programme to address gaps in children's knowledge of early reading. The curriculum ignites children's curiosity for learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) successfully access the same curriculum, with well-planned additional support as required. Leaders and staff have ensured that the curriculum is fully inclusive. There is a calm learning atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are attentive and eager learners.

Additional support

The support from the Bridge Multi-Academy Trust has been instrumental in improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Subject-specific support in phonics, reading, writing, mathematics and foundation subjects continues to strengthen the design of the curriculum and the subject knowledge of staff.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with governors, including the chair of governors as well as the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors met with pupils and a range of staff, alongside listening to pupils read. Inspectors also looked at 68 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 free-text messages, as well as 22 staff questionnaires.