

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 June 2021

Annette Blewett
Headteacher
Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School
High Barns
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 4RB

Dear Mrs Blewett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring 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 to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) 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.

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

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- leaders implement curriculum plans that enable pupils to build up their knowledge securely in all their subjects
- governors support and challenge leaders to improve the quality of education that pupils receive, monitoring the impact of leaders' actions carefully
- leaders provide a consistently strong quality of education for all pupils across all year groups.

Context

Since the last inspection, leaders have restructured the school leadership team. This is due to changes in staffing at the school. Some subject leaders have taken on the responsibility of leading a subject recently.

A governor already in post took on the role of the chair of governors in May 2020. Since the last inspection, two new governors have been appointed and three governors have left the school. There is a vacancy for a local authority governor and a parent governor.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, essential actions needed to improve the school have not happened quickly enough. Improvements to subject curriculum planning have not been sufficiently rapid or substantial.

At the previous inspection, pupils were not developing their knowledge well enough across all subjects. Some subject leaders had not identified precisely enough both what pupils should be taught and the order in which they should learn new things. Curriculum plans remain incomplete. Senior leaders have started to make use of external support to help subject leaders to develop these plans. This work is at an early stage. As a result, teachers do not always know what they should teach and when they should teach it. Teachers are using their assessment of what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Assessment within the foundation subjects is less well developed.

Pupils writing across the school was not well enough developed at the previous inspection. The writing curriculum has been redesigned. Teachers are giving pupils work to do that helps them to develop their knowledge, step-by-step. Sometimes, teachers do not pick up pupils' mistakes quickly enough which means that these persist. In the early years, teachers insist that children present their work well and take a pride in it.

At the time of the previous inspection, too many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were not achieving as well as they should. Teachers and other staff are now providing support to pupils with SEND that typically meets their individual needs. Pupils with SEND are now fully involved in lessons and able to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Leaders and staff have made teaching pupils to read confidently and fluently a top priority. Staff help those pupils who find reading more difficult to catch up. Pupils told me that they enjoy reading. They said that staff encourage them to read a lot at school and at home. Pupils are getting better at reading because of this work.

Governors have taken on clear responsibilities for monitoring different aspects of the school's work. They are undertaking training to develop their ability to check on standards at the school. Governors do not currently challenge leaders rigorously enough about the progress they are making in their efforts to raise standards.

Additional support

Since September 2020, the new local authority adviser has provided support and challenge to leaders. Plans are in place to secure further expert support to help staff to develop the curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I carried out visits to lessons, carried out a work scrutiny, met with staff and looked at planning documentation.

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

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop
Her Majesty's Inspector