

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 May 2021

Rachel Purvis
Headteacher
William Rhodes Primary & Nursery School
Hunloke Avenue
Boythorpe
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S40 2NR

Dear Mrs Purvis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to William Rhodes Primary & Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. 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 taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the curriculum is planned and sequenced well in all subjects
- ensure that all staff implement the changes made to the teaching of reading.

Context

COVID-19 has slowed some aspects of leaders' plans to improve the curriculum. Leaders have given additional focus to promote pupils' resilience and well-being following the most recent lockdown.

Main findings

Leaders have made many changes and brought about improvements since the previous inspection. The leadership team is cohesive and increasingly effective in doing this. Leaders and staff have a shared vision to improve the school. Leaders know what the school does well and what still needs to be done. Their plans for improvement are now more sharply focused. They show how leaders think in detail about the changes they will make, who is responsible and when things will be done by.

Leaders have improved the curriculum for mathematics, reading, science, geography and other subjects. Many subjects are now planned well. In the strongest, leaders have identified the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which they will learn it. They have planned the most important vocabulary pupils will learn in each term and year. However, some subjects, such as history and religious education, remain less well developed.

Leaders have created a plan for how they will check the quality of teaching and curriculum planning for different subjects. Leaders for some subjects carry out subject reviews. These involve visiting lessons and looking at planning and pupils' work to support staff to improve the quality of their teaching. In mathematics and reading, for example, leaders work alongside staff in the classroom. Staff check what pupils know and remember more effectively.

Leaders have continued to improve the school's phonics programme and the teaching of reading. Leaders and staff check pupils' knowledge carefully and provide support for those who have fallen behind. There is an agreed approach to the teaching of phonics. However, teaching is sometimes still not as consistent and precise as it should be. Sometimes, for example, staff do not help pupils learn how to blend sounds as well as they could. Sometimes, they do not make sure books are matched well to the sounds that pupils know.

In the early years, leaders have focused on areas of learning in which children are sometimes less strong, including phonics and writing. They have a well-thought-out plan for how children's learning will progress from the early years into key stage 1. Leaders and staff plan how pupils will learn across the whole school. To support this, leaders have provided training on how staff can help pupils remember what they have learned. Staff say, 'there is a whole school approach for everything'.

Leaders have brought about improvements in other areas of the school's work. Leaders and staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While a small number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were less positive, the special educational needs coordinator has a secure oversight of how well pupils with SEND are learning.

Leaders have improved pupils' attendance. They check this carefully and work closely with families of pupils for whom they have concerns about persistent absence.

The governing body has changed its structure and has a sharper understanding of the curriculum. It has plans to develop further its checks on how well the school is doing. The governing body is aware of and becoming more effective in the support and challenge it provides the school.

Additional support

The school has benefited from the support the local authority has helped to arrange. This has included staff training and work with leaders in education.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher and co-headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited lessons, met with staff, heard pupils read, spoke with pupils and looked at a sample of their work. I looked at documentation relating to safeguarding and the school's curriculum planning, as well as plans for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector