

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



11 June 2021

Leila Naldrett  
Head of School  
Gatehouse Primary Academy  
Secmaton Lane  
Dawlish  
Devon  
EX7 0LW

Dear Mrs Naldrett

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Gatehouse Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Tracey Reynolds and Heather Barraclough, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to your school on 12–13 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 to improve the school since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection that took place in November 2017. 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 actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.**

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the First Federation multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 12 May 2021 to 13 May 2021**

### **Context**

There have been no staff changes since the additional monitoring inspection in February 2021.

### **The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation**

Leaders, with support from the trust, are securing effective improvement across the school. Leaders are determined to improve provision further. Staff are motivated and share leaders' vision. Staff appreciate training that is provided by the school and the trust.

Trustees are ambitious. They are diligent and have established effective plans with school leaders. Leaders monitor these plans closely and make suitable adaptations. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, trustees made purposeful visits to assure themselves of the quality of the school's work. They have plans in place to restart on-site visits.

The majority of pupils have settled back into school following the last national lockdown. However, some children in the early years are finding school routines more challenging. The early years leader and her staff are working well to ensure that children are ready for the next stage of their education.

At the last inspection, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were not having their needs met. With support from the trust, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is making a positive difference to pupils' learning. She is knowledgeable and has shared her expertise with staff, so they plan work that is appropriate for pupils with SEND. Pupils, staff and parents value the support from the SENCo.

Leaders have put an effective early reading curriculum in place. This ensures that pupils gain the fundamental knowledge and skills they need to learn how to read. In addition, pupils who are behind with reading are being well supported to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy reading. However, once pupils have secured the necessary early reading skills, the next stage of the reading curriculum is not as well planned. In some year groups, the reading curriculum does not build on pupils' knowledge and skills. In addition, reading activities are not closely linked to what teachers intend pupils to learn. As a result, some pupils do not acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their reading.

Leaders are determined that pupils' understanding of vocabulary should improve. Teachers ensure that pupils know the meaning of subject-specific words to be able

to read, write and talk about what they are learning. This is helping pupils to broaden their vocabulary and helping them to understand key ideas and concepts.

Until recently, the writing curriculum has not been well planned. Pupils did not have enough opportunities to build on and remember key knowledge and skills. Older pupils have weaknesses in their spelling and punctuation. This is hampering their ability to write accurately and to take their learning to the next stage. However, there are positive signs that the new writing curriculum is having a greater impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are now building a deeper understanding of key concepts before moving to the next stage in their writing.

Leaders and staff have dedicated much energy to improving the curriculum in mathematics. The curriculum planning in mathematics is more advanced than in other subjects. The leader for mathematics makes good use of the valuable external support from the trust. The curriculum has been re-structured so that pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills build well over time. He has made appropriate changes to ensure that pupils are able to recall key concepts and ideas. However, systems to check what pupils have remembered are not efficient enough.

In 2019, leaders began to re-design the broader curriculum. Although staff started to implement the new curriculum, progress has been slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the curriculum is not yet where leaders would like it to be. Some subjects are more developed than others. For example, the curriculum for modern foreign languages is well structured. However, teachers' subject knowledge of modern foreign languages is not secure. In contrast, the geography curriculum is being well implemented. This is because, the curriculum is well thought out and teachers' subject knowledge is stronger. Consequently, pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding are strengthening.

Subject leaders do not always know if the curriculum is taught as they intended. This is because they are not checking if teaching is helping pupils to learn the content well. In addition, teachers' assessment is not always planned to check what pupils have remembered. This means teachers are not informed well enough to plan appropriate next steps for learning. You are aware that this area of the curriculum needs more work.

### **Additional support**

Leaders make strong use of external support. They draw upon specific expertise to improve the quality of education. In turn, this is helping staff to make appropriate changes to improve curriculum leadership further.

## **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of school, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils and the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard some pupils read. The lead inspector also spoke with trustees and a local hub representative to discuss actions taken since the previous inspection.