

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 July 2021

Katie Charlton
Headteacher
Sandbrook Community Primary School
Hartley Lane
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL11 2LR

Dear Mrs Charlton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sandbrook Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 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 you 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:

- embed and refine the systems for assessing pupils' reading in key stage 2, so that teachers plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do
- embed recent changes to the teaching of spelling in key stage 2 so that pupils are able to spell accurately.

Context

Since the most recent section 5 inspection on 18 and 19 February 2020, seven members of staff have left the school and seven new members of staff have joined. A new leader with responsibility for the early years has been appointed. There have also been changes to the governing body. Two governors have left, and three new governors have been appointed.

Main findings

In response to the findings from the previous inspection, you implemented an appropriate plan that identifies and prioritises the actions required to improve the school. You and other school leaders check on these actions routinely. This is helping to ensure that you are bringing about the necessary changes, in a timely manner, to the quality of education that pupils receive.

You concentrated first on implementing a well-planned programme for the teaching of phonics. Staff have received training to successfully deliver this curriculum. They use assessment information well to make sure that pupils who struggle with phonics are identified quickly and are given additional support. Books that pupils in the early years and key stage 1 read are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. This is helping to improve pupils' reading fluency.

Pupils have access to high-quality texts that strengthen their knowledge of other subjects. You have also made sure that pupils at the early stage of reading in key stage 2 have access to the phonics programme. However, teachers do not always use assessment information as well in key stage 2 to plan reading activities that build on what pupils already know and can do.

Alongside the improvements in reading, you have also recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of spelling in key stage 2. Plans identify which spelling patterns pupils need to have learned by particular points in time. This is helping staff to plan activities that build on what pupils already know. However, work in pupils' books shows that some pupils continue to spell words that they should know inaccurately.

You and school staff have made improvements to many aspects of the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs

and/or disabilities. You and the staff have ensured that new curriculum plans are suitably ambitious. Subsequently, in each subject, curriculum plans identify what pupils, including children in the early years, need to learn and by when.

Subject leaders are ambitious and knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They provide support to their colleagues and review the impact of curriculum plans to ensure that pupils know and remember more as they progress through the school. Subject leaders have adjusted curriculum plans to take account of gaps in pupils' learning that have arisen due to the pandemic. Work in pupils' books shows that staff have used this information well to revisit learning and build on what pupils should already know.

Governors have a strong understanding of their key roles and responsibilities. They are well informed about the actions that you and other leaders take in order for the school to become good at the next inspection. Governors have met with subject leaders to ensure that they understand the changes being made to the school's curriculum. They have prioritised the improvements made to pupils' reading, for example by investing in new reading books.

Additional support

You have used support from the local authority to help focus your plans on accurate school improvement priorities. Advice from the local authority has also helped you and the staff check on the quality of the curriculum and lead the school through the pandemic.

You and the staff have also appreciated the advice and support received from educational consultants and the local hubs for English. This support has been used to improve leadership skills within the school and to make the necessary changes to the curriculum. Staff have also received external training to support their mental health and well-being. Many staff are now mental health champions.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, a group of curriculum leaders and staff. I also met with the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I met with a group of pupils to ask them about their work and their experiences of school life. I visited phonics and reading lessons, accompanied by the reading leader and the deputy headteacher. I also observed pupils reading with teachers and support staff. I examined a variety of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and curriculum plans. I took account of the 79 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 47 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Barlow
Her Majesty's Inspector