

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



2 February 2024

Ian Smith
Head of School
Killamarsh Junior School
38 Sheffield Road
Killamarsh
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S21 2EA

Dear Mr Smith

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Killamarsh Junior School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 25 January 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, governors, the local authority and members of staff the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also met with groups of pupils, visited lessons, observed pupils during social times and discussed the school's safeguarding arrangements. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Since the time of the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school. The current headteacher was seconded to the role in November

2023. An additional member of the senior leadership team took up their post in January 2024 with responsibility for overseeing pupils' attendance. The school is scheduled to become an academy and to join a multi-academy trust in August 2024.

The school has prioritised reading. Following the previous inspection, swift action was taken to introduce a phonics scheme that matches pupils' needs. All staff have completed training about how to teach pupils to read. Those pupils who access the phonics programme, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), improve the accuracy and fluency of their reading. They read books matched to their reading ability. The school has also developed an ambitious reading curriculum for all pupils. The books that pupils read throughout their time at school include engaging fiction and non-fiction texts as well as poetry. Pupils say they enjoy reading. They can name the books and authors they have read with their teachers.

The school has introduced a new curriculum. This curriculum sets out in each subject precisely which knowledge and skills should be taught and when. Staff say that this has resulted in a greater focus on teaching subject-specific concepts. They appreciate the consistency with which subjects are now being taught to all pupils. Pupils are able to share some of their learning in relation to styles of writing in English and to Inuit art in their art and design lessons. The changes to the curriculum have enabled subject leaders to improve their knowledge of the subjects they lead and of how their curriculums are sequenced. However, subject leaders are yet to develop consistently effective oversight of their subject areas. This is in part due to the recent and significant changes to the curriculum followed by the introduction of a new assessment system. The school is aware that developing subject leaders' knowledge of their roles as well as their confidence to execute them to a consistently high standard remains a priority.

Pupils with SEND benefit from personalised strategies that help them to feel comfortable in classrooms and learn the curriculum alongside their peers. More recently, staff have completed initial training about how to set personalised targets for pupils with SEND. The precision of these targets has improved since the time of the last inspection. However, the quality of target setting is not yet consistent. Some targets lack the information required to enable staff to help pupils with SEND take the next step in achieving their long-term personal and educational goals.

Current and previous leaders have acted to address the school's priorities. The pace of change has recently accelerated. This acceleration was necessary for the school to improve the quality of education that pupils access. The senior leadership team has expanded to increase capacity to address the school's priorities, particularly in relation to attendance. There has been an increase in the time given to the oversight of the provision for pupils with SEND. Governors hold leaders to account, including more recently over the work to improve pupils' attendance.

At the previous inspection, inspectors found that some pupils used derogatory language. Pupils learn about respecting and celebrating difference. For example, a programme of assemblies focused on protected characteristics has been delivered. The school has also

introduced a sequence of lessons designed to help pupils understand and communicate about their own and others' emotions. Pupils now read books that cover a more diverse range of characters and themes. This work is having a positive impact. Younger pupils say that they do not hear derogatory language. Older pupils say that they hear inappropriate language occasionally from a very small number of pupils but that the frequency with which they hear it has reduced. Pupils shared that they value their learning about feelings. They said that a new understanding of how to identify and talk about their emotions is helping them inside and outside school. Regarding behaviour in general, pupils say there can be some disruption to their lessons.

Most pupils' attendance is improving. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. However, some of the most vulnerable pupils do not attend well enough. A range of strategies, including whole-class and individual rewards, is in place to encourage pupils to attend. The school does not yet analyse the causes of absence with sufficient rigour. However, leaders have begun to address this.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Fearn-Davies
His Majesty's Inspector