

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Julie Mills
Executive Headteacher
Brookfield Primary Academy
Lime Grove
Swinton
Mexborough
South Yorkshire
S64 8TQ

Dear Mrs Mills

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brookfield Primary Academy

Following my visit with Christine Cook, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 May 2017, 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 since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2016.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2016.

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels so that:
 - all safeguarding arrangements satisfy the requirements of the most recent legislation
 - effective and robust systems are in place to hold leaders and managers to account for the progress of all groups of pupils, but particularly for those who are disadvantaged
 - leaders know the impact of pupil premium funding and target extra resources where they are needed
 - policies and procedures are up to date, being consistently implemented and regularly reviewed
 - there are effective arrangements for governance in place, which challenge leaders to bring about rapid improvement
 - the curriculum is fit for purpose and provides pupils with a broad and balanced programme of work.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and accelerate outcomes for pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve in all areas of the curriculum
 - checking that assessment information is accurate and is used to plan appropriate challenge and support for different groups of pupils, particularly the most able
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge so that they know what to teach
 - securing a stable and permanent teaching staff who are well supported by middle leaders to bring about rapid improvements
 - developing the learning environment in the Nursery class to improve curriculum provision.
- Improve attendance and behaviour by ensuring that:
 - absence of all pupils is analysed, including for specific groups of pupils, and effective action is taken to make sure that pupils are in school and ready to learn
 - the behaviour policy is consistently implemented and has a positive impact on learning in the classroom
 - all staff know how to deal with challenging behaviour and keep all pupils safe when incidents arise.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 18 to 19 May 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of staff, groups of pupils, parents, the members of the interim executive committee (IEC) and a representative from Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT). Inspectors observed learning in lessons and looked at pupils' books. Some observations in lessons were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.

Context

Following the section 5 inspection in September 2016, the headteacher left the school. An executive headteacher was seconded to the school from WCAT from October 2016. A senior leader for key stage 2 and mathematics is also seconded to the school from WCAT. The governing body was replaced by the IEC in October 2016. There are still a number of temporary teachers covering for sickness absence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management has improved. The executive headteacher has stabilised the school and set the vision for improvement. Staff value her approach and say that she is a role model. As a result, expectations across the school have been raised. Leaders of English, mathematics and the early years have been coached and supported by academy improvement partners from WCAT. Consequently, leadership is developing in these areas. However, wider middle leadership has not been developed.

The statement of action and the plans for improvement are clear, as are the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken to improve the school. However, plans lack numerical milestones, for example about expected half-termly improvements in attendance. Consequently, leaders and governors lack clear targets by which to monitor the impact of actions.

The executive headteacher and the chair of the IEC worked quickly to ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. As a result, recruitment checks on new staff are robust and the single central record is compliant with requirements. The new safeguarding policy is comprehensive and well understood by staff. Staff receive regular training and updates and the staff's understanding of these is checked. Systems to track pupils who may be at risk are thorough. Staff are quick to report safeguarding concerns. Subsequent records show that responses to concerns are timely. New schemes of work and visiting speakers, such as the police, ensure that all pupils are aware of potential risks and know how to keep themselves safe. Consequently, safeguarding now meets requirements. This is confirmed by an audit carried out by the local authority. Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe.

Policies and procedures are now up to date and the website now complies with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish. The pupil premium review was completed in January 2017 and an action plan written to respond appropriately to the areas for improvement. However, this plan also lacks numerical targets for the improvements in the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Extra help for disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up is provided. The impact can be seen in some year groups, where disadvantaged pupils are making more rapid progress than their peers. However, this is not consistent. In some year groups, differences between the weaker outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others remain.

The IEC members are experienced WCAT leaders whose strengths lie in the areas most needed for the school to improve. The IEC meets regularly to review the impact of actions taken to address the areas for improvement. As a result, senior leaders are both challenged and supported. The review of governance has recently been completed. The review highlights the need for careful transition to a local governing board. Three governors, including a local councillor and two parent governors, have been recruited and form the shadow governing board. It is too soon to see the impact of this transition.

New curriculum plans ensure appropriate coverage of subjects and cross-curricular links. There is evidence in books that pupils receive regular teaching in science, history and geography. Pupils say that they are enjoying these lessons. However, the curriculum is not fully embedded and there is little evidence of the teaching of religious studies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The headteacher shares her high expectations and these are reflected in classrooms. Teachers have increased expectations of what pupils can do. As a result, pupils' learning behaviours are largely positive. Handwriting and presentation have improved. Pupils are keen to learn when presented with interesting activities and are engaged in their learning. Pupils show detailed recall of what they have learned. For example, in a lesson about Anglo-Saxons, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils remembered the details they had learned about Britain at that time in history and applied them maturely to a new concept. However, the work to secure consistently high expectations is hampered by continued staffing instability.

For the most part, pupils work hard in their lessons and are starting to make progress over time, although this is inconsistent and varies between year groups and classes. Teachers have more accurate assessment information but do not always use it to plan appropriate challenge and support, particularly for the most able. Too often the whole class does the same work. As a result, the most able pupils do not make the rapid progress they are capable of. Teaching assistants support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Consequently, these pupils access their learning effectively.

Developing leaders and staff training have led to early signs of improvement in the teaching of English and mathematics. Staff are beginning to develop more confidence in their subject knowledge, which is bringing improvements in the planning of learning. A new teaching sequence to improve pupils' writing allied to their reading is in place. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.

The learning environment in the early years has been transformed. Children have rich and wide-ranging opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and engage their imagination. Children are articulate and confident. The school's assessment approaches and the curriculum have been improved. Consequently, children are beginning to make more rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There is a new behaviour policy which is implemented more consistently. Pupils can explain the consequences of poor behaviour and the rewards for good behaviour. The school is working closely with the local authority to support the behaviour and learning of a small group of pupils whose behaviour makes them vulnerable. Staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved. During the inspection, apart from a little off-task behaviour, no poor behaviour was seen during lessons. Behaviour on the playground is friendly and cooperative. However, there are occasionally some boisterous games. Pupils say that behaviour has been helped by the introduction of anti-bullying ambassadors and play leaders.

Pupils are polite and kind to each other. Relationships between adults and pupils are a strength. Parents and pupils value the executive headteacher's open and friendly approach, particularly at the morning 'meet and greet'.

Attendance is unacceptably low and is not improving, despite the work of the school with families and the new rewards for good attendance. An increasing number of pupils are persistently absent, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although pupils know that they should have good attendance, and can describe the rewards for attending well, attendance does not have a high profile in the displays around the school.

Outcomes for pupils

New progress tracking systems enable the headteacher to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils at half-termly meetings. The progress information contributed by teachers is quality assured by the headteacher and further checked at meetings with trust representatives and other local schools. As a result, the progress information accurately measures how well individual pupils are progressing.

The school's progress information shows that the outcomes of the current Year 6 are likely to be a little better than the outcomes at key stage 2 in 2016, when

progress in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below the national average. Pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 are still well below what could be expected from pupils of a similar age, although attainment and progress in reading has improved in the current Year 6. Progress information and work in books show that overall progress in lower key stage 2 is not rapid enough.

The school's progress information suggests that the outcomes for reading of the current Year 2 are likely to be similar to last year's outcomes, which were in line with the national average at key stage 1. However, Year 2 pupils still need to catch up in mathematics and writing. The quality of writing in Year 2 books suggests that progress over time is accelerating.

External support

WCAT has supported the leadership of the school through the secondment of the executive headteacher and the leader for key stage 2 and mathematics. Both have a positive impact on the improvements seen in the school. However, the headteacher's secondment is due to finish at the end of this term. WCAT's academy improvement advisor for early years works with the leader for early years on a weekly basis. As a result, provision and outcomes in the early years have improved.

Until April 2017, another academy improvement advisor worked in the school two days each week and was instrumental in developing leadership in English and mathematics and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in upper key stage 2. However, this support has now diminished. As a result, the capacity to bring about improvements, particularly in lower key stage 2, has decreased.

The executive headteacher has started to build helpful links with the local authority, particularly to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable pupils. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.