

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Victoria Wallis-O'Dell
Lillington Primary School
Cubbington Road
Lillington
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV32 7AG

Dear Ms Wallis-O'Dell

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lillington Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 and 9 October 2019, 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 March 2019.

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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2019.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring that work is matched well to pupils' abilities, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils of lower ability and higher ability
 - making sure that staff make good use of assessment during lessons to clarify learning for pupils who do not understand or to provide more challenge
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics so that their teaching promotes pupils' deep understanding of mathematical concepts
 - ensuring that pupils are supported to apply their skills in handwriting, grammar and punctuation consistently and accurately in their writing
 - providing high-quality individual support for staff, where teaching is weak.
- Improve the impact of leadership and governance by:
 - developing a more effective level of challenge from governors, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding so that future spending decisions are targeted more precisely and raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that the physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent appropriately and fully to improve the quality of provision and opportunities for pupils
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of support provided for pupils with SEND
 - putting in place training for staff so that they can better support pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that pupils with complex needs receive a sufficiently broad and balanced education and are well prepared for secondary school
 - providing clear responsibilities and direction to all senior and middle leaders
 - making sure that improvement plans have precise timescales for actions
 - further developing the curriculum so that it deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding across the foundation subjects.
- Provide more robust safeguarding arrangements by:
 - ensuring that pupils are supervised safely and effectively at social times
 - making sure that pre-appointment checks of staff are overseen by governors and senior leaders
 - reviewing and monitoring risk assessments related to fire and site safety.

- Improve behaviour and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions by:
 - continuing to embed the new behaviour policy
 - developing more effective systems to monitor and evaluate incidents related to behaviour and bullying
 - urgently addressing the poor behaviour of some pupils at social times.
- Develop the quality of provision and raise attainment in the early years by:
 - urgently addressing the quality of teaching and children’s experiences in the Nursery
 - making sure that adults are deployed to have the fullest impact on children’s learning
 - ensuring that activities planned for children provide an effective level of challenge and motivation, particularly for boys.

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.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 October 2019

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and the school's leadership team. She met with a range of staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader, the school business manager and those with responsibility for safeguarding. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with the national leader in education who is coordinating external support for the school.

The inspector visited all classes accompanied by the headteacher. She met with pupils to talk about their experience of school and observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. The inspector also considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and the quality of leadership and management. She did not check the school's work to improve pupils' personal development to the same extent.

Context

At the time of the last inspection, the school did not have a headteacher. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2019. There has been a small number of new staff appointed. For example, the mathematics coordinator joined the school in September 2019. The headteacher has clarified the roles and responsibilities of existing staff and many staff are now teaching in different year groups.

Leaders have restructured the early years. They have combined pre-school and Nursery classes to create a single provision for two- and three-year-olds.

There have been several changes to the governing body and a new chair of the governing body has been elected. There are currently some vacancies on the governing body.

The school is subject to an academy order. A sponsor has been agreed and there are plans for the school to join a multi-academy trust in spring 2020.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

The quality of education

The headteacher, supported by her leadership team, is taking appropriate and effective action to address the concerns identified in the previous inspection report. Actions focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills across a range of subjects, but particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. A new system to support

assessment across the school is helping teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' progress.

Leaders have introduced new approaches to the teaching of mathematics, reading and writing. These have raised teachers' expectations about what all pupils should be achieving. For example, in mathematics, there is a greater focus on pupils applying their mathematical skills to solve problems. In English, there is a focus on expanding pupils' vocabulary to help develop their comprehension skills. In key stage 1, leaders have made changes so that all pupils now have opportunities to practise their phonics, writing and mathematics skills every day.

Leaders are currently working with staff to introduce a new topic-based curriculum. This is closely matched to the national curriculum. Increasingly, lessons are planned with the needs of different pupils in mind, including those with SEND. Pupils are beginning to take more pride in their work. They respond to feedback from teachers about spelling and grammar.

All classes now have a range of resources to support pupils with SEND. Consequently, pupils with SEND now access the same curriculum and have the same opportunities as their classmates. The SENCo has provided all staff with information to help them identify and support pupils' additional needs.

Staff are positive about the training and the external support they receive to help them implement the many changes. However, more time and input are needed to ensure that all staff have the confidence and skills to teach a broad range of subjects and support pupils' needs effectively. Leaders have not yet had the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of the new approaches.

Personal development

The inspector did not give the same level of consideration to pupils' personal development. However, she did speak to several pupils, including a group of older pupils, about their views of the school. Many pupils feel that the school has changed for the better since the last inspection. They report feeling safer and say that the school is 'nicer'.

Pupils told the inspector that there are lots of clubs to join and these are open to everyone. They include choir, gardening, board games, dance and football clubs. There are currently few trips or visits to help bring the curriculum to life.

Some older pupils have opportunities to take on school-wide responsibilities, such as house captains. The school council has recently been reinstated.

Pupils are not clear about how to keep safe when they are using the internet. Leaders have suitable plans in place to address this, along with providing information and support for parents and carers.

Behaviour and attitudes

All leaders, staff and pupils spoken to say that the new behaviour policy is having a positive effect on behaviour. It is simple to understand and has been successfully adapted for pupils of all ages. As one pupil said: 'It has made people be more sensible because they know what will happen if they are naughty.' Pupils report feeling happier on the playground because there are more adults to supervise them and they have more time to play.

Classrooms are calm environments and most pupils are focused on learning, especially in key stage 2. Adults increasingly model the behaviours expected from the pupils, for example by not shouting. Pupils are responding well to the changes and there are fewer incidents of poor behaviour in lessons. Some pupils recognise that their behaviour does not always meet expectations, for example if their class teacher is away.

Not all pupils are clear about what bullying is and whether it happens in school. Leaders are introducing a new personal, social, health and economics education programme. This will help to develop pupils' understanding about how they can stop bullying, should it occur, including when online.

The headteacher has introduced a new system for recording concerns about behaviour and pupils' safety. Staff say that they are confident using the new system. Leaders have started to identify some patterns in pupils' behaviour. The headteacher is working with parents and external agencies as necessary. It is too soon to be able to track the impact of the new system.

Early years

Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant changes in the organisation, structure, leadership and staffing of the early years. Leaders have created a Nursery unit which includes two- and three-year-old children. This is enabling staff to share good practice across the setting and helping to raise expectations. Leaders have introduced a balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Reception class children now have access to a range of activities to practise their reading, writing and number skills every day. There is a clear focus on developing children's language and communication skills. Many activities are based around a class book.

Staff have established clear daily routines and most children are happy and settled. Adults look after the children well, although some recently introduced systems to monitor the environment are not yet fully embedded.

Reception class staff benefit from regular external support. This is helping to ensure that activities are carefully planned, purposeful and sufficiently challenging for the children. In some cases, the pace of change is not yet as quick as it could be. Leaders' expectations of staff are now clear and staff can access online training. This is helping to develop their knowledge and confidence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Despite only being in post for a short time, the headteacher has made a tangible difference to the effectiveness of the school. She is very clear about what actions need to be completed to address the areas requiring improvement. These are then broken down into systematic and manageable tasks to be achieved within precise timescales. She has high expectations for both staff and pupils.

Leadership roles have been clarified and leaders say that there is now a purposeful vision for the school. All leaders have action plans to develop their areas of responsibility. As it is early in the process, there are some inconsistencies in approach and leaders have not yet had time to monitor the impact of the changes they have introduced.

Almost all governors have joined the governing body since the previous inspection. Governors currently do not have a strong overview of the school as they are in the initial stages of establishing their roles. The new chair of the governing body is aware that the governing body will need external support and training. This is to ensure that it can fulfil its statutory responsibilities and hold school leaders to account effectively.

Since the previous inspection, a lot has been done to improve the provision for pupils with SEND. All pupils on the SEND register now have a support plan with relevant targets. Pupils with an education, health and care plan now receive the support to which they are entitled. There are a range of interventions in place but actions to monitor the impact of these have not yet started. Additional specialist input is in place for pupils who require it. The SENCo is aware that staff need more time, training and support to ensure that they can fully meet the wide range of pupils' needs. The needs of pupils in the SEND resource base are well catered for.

There is an appropriate plan in place to ensure that the PE and sport premium is used to encourage pupils' participation in sport and improve the school's facilities.

Leaders have yet to develop a plan to ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The inspector spoke to several members of staff about their workload. Those spoken to acknowledged that workloads had increased this term. However, they recognise that what they are being asked to do is appropriate to bring about the necessary changes and improvements. They expressed confidence in the

headteacher and could give examples of positive developments because of the changes already made.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that all staff have regular training to help them keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders make sure that everyone knows what to do if they have any worries about a pupil's welfare. Concerns are followed up quickly and with the right people. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that the right checks are made on staff before they start working at the school. The headteacher has reviewed health and safety assessments. Necessary work has been completed and leaders are taking steps to improve further the decor of the building and the school grounds.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The new behaviour policy is having a significant impact on improving pupils' behaviour. This is enabling teachers to focus on improving the quality of education.
- Leaders have raised expectations for staff and pupils. They are trying to achieve the necessary improvements while, at the same time, being aware of the demands they are placing on staff.

External support

Since the previous inspection, the school has received considerable support from St John's Teaching School Alliance. Warwickshire local authority commissions this support and monitors the impact of the work through bimonthly multi-agency meetings.

The input is having a positive impact on several of the areas identified as requiring improvement. For example, support has focused on improving the quality of the provision for children in the early years and pupils with SEND. Effective coaching support is in place for the English and mathematics subject leaders and a recently qualified teacher. The school's headteacher also benefits from working with the headteacher of St John's Teaching School.

Many staff speak positively about the quality of support they have received and the beneficial impact it has had on their practice.