

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 June 2019

Mrs Kate Whitford
Head of School
Padstow School
Grenville Road
Padstow
Cornwall
PL28 8EX

Dear Mrs Whitford

Special measures monitoring inspection of Padstow School

Following my visit to your school on 5–6 June 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2017. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2017.

- An external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - evaluations of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are accurate
 - those responsible for governance at all levels hold school leaders to account for improving the school
 - those responsible for governance check the accuracy of the information they receive about the school's performance and make sure that actions bring about rapid improvement.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that teachers:
 - make accurate assessments of how well pupils are developing their skills and understanding
 - use assessments effectively to ensure that teaching and learning build on what pupils already know, can do and understand and so enable them to make rapid progress
 - provide teaching and learning that motivate and challenge pupils to engage fully in their work and become resilient, effective learners
 - check that all pupils understand the guidance they receive and heed this advice
 - fully support children in the early years to develop their learning in mathematics and writing.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment throughout the school by:
 - making sure that all pupils across the range of abilities and starting points make at least good progress
 - addressing shortcomings in pupils' arithmetical knowledge and developing pupils' ability to reason mathematically and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - improving pupils' reading skills by encouraging them to more readily use and apply their phonic understanding when tackling new words
 - further developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 5 June 2019 to 6 June 2019

Evidence

The inspector met with the head of school, the deputy chief executive officer, the pastoral lead and the mathematics leader. The inspector spoke informally to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Teaching and learning were observed in most classes and pupils' work was reviewed. Documentation relating to pupils' attendance and arrangements for safeguarding pupils were also considered. The inspector also scrutinised information relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning and minutes from the Academy Improvement Group (AIG), hub council and board of trustees meetings.

Context

There have been no staffing changes since the previous monitoring visit. The local hub councillors (a strand of governance) have resigned and new ones have been appointed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The determined actions of the head of school have sustained the improvements identified at the previous monitoring visit. Parents express an increasing confidence in the school's leadership. Parents report that they value the approachability of staff and say their children are happy in school. Teaching is improving across the school.

The systematic implementation of the school's improvement plan is securing the necessary changes in ethos and expectations of what staff must do and of what pupils are capable of achieving. The head of school is unwavering in articulating her expectations of teachers. She is accurate in her evaluations of the quality of teaching. Her extensive and responsive guidance to teachers has supported further improvement in pupils' attainment and progress this term. Staff morale continues to improve and reflects a spirit of high ambition and teamwork. While school leaders are taking effective action to deal with any staff underperformance, there is more to do to fine-tune plans and expectations so that the pace of improvement can gather momentum and embed.

The capacity of leadership is still vulnerable in terms of addressing pupils' residual underachievement. The head of school continues to lead English. The new mathematics leader is supporting the teaching of mathematics well. The part-time leader of special educational needs has been effective in addressing weaknesses in identification of pupils' needs. However, leaders' actions have not yet been successful in eradicating the pupils' underachievement resulting from previously weak teaching.

Those responsible for governance continue to know and understand more about the school's work and provide effective support and challenge. Actions identified at the pupil premium review are now well established and are leading to better identification of need for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, there are encouraging signs of improvements in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. The work of the Academy Improvement Group (AIG) has been particularly important given the inactivity at local hub level (due to changes in membership).

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality and rigour of the school's assessment systems have improved. Teachers' assessment is broadly accurate. Local authority checks on teachers' assessments in the early years and in key stage 1 confirm this. However, there is still much to do to raise the quality of teaching to be consistently good across the school. Inconsistencies remain in how effective teachers are at using their assessments of what pupils can do, know and understand to support pupils' learning. Teaching is not yet enabling those pupils who have underachieved due to previously weak teaching to catch up.

Staff are responding well to a range of training and coaching. Clear routines have been established in lessons since the previous monitoring visit. An agreed and consistent approach enables lessons to start in a calm and purposeful manner. As a result, low-level disruption in lessons is now rare. Pupils are developing resilience. They take pride in their work and engage enthusiastically in lessons. However, where teachers' expectations of presentation and spelling are not high enough, pupils continue to make the same errors and their progress is hindered.

The indoor environment in the early years has been reorganised to increase opportunities for children to make choices about their learning. An overhaul of the physical learning environment, particularly of the outdoors, is now a priority so that children can learn effectively and safely outdoors. Although assessments show that more children in the early years are making better progress than previously, children's writing skills remains underdeveloped.

The sharp focus on pupils' mathematical skills has been effective. Pupils' fluency and understanding of number is improving. However, senior leaders acknowledge that the better-matched teaching and curriculum are not yet leading to pupils catching up quickly enough across the school. Pupils' gaps in understanding remain.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are positive. This is a significant improvement from the previous visit. Pupils' conduct around the school is good. Pupils are polite to other pupils, staff and visitors alike. Relationships are positive throughout the school. Pupils report that they enjoy good friendships and uninterrupted lessons.

School leaders continue to work closely with parents and pupils to improve attendance. The school is relentless in promoting good attendance. However, too many families continue to take their children out of school in term time. Some pupils miss too much school and their learning suffers. The trust is reviewing its policy on dealing with weak attendance to take a stronger stance where poor attendance occurs.

Outcomes for pupils

Senior leaders have implemented a more robust process of collecting and analysing information about pupils' progress. Teachers are more aware of groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those supported by the pupil premium. Teachers are increasingly amending their teaching and support to enable these pupils to make progress against their individual targets.

The few pupils who have education, health and care plans generally make good progress against their very particular targets. However, the progress of pupils who receive support for their SEND remains a priority for the school. Teaching is not meeting the needs of pupils who receive SEND support.

The teaching of phonics continues to strengthen. Consequently, younger pupils spell and use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to decode words accurately.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is improving to be more in line with the national average. An increased focus on the most able pupils since the previous monitoring visit has paid off. More pupils who are most-able are being challenged. However, too few disadvantaged pupils who had previous high starting points are making the strides in progress they need to be in line with their peers.

Leaders have implemented a new system to support pupils' reading across key stage 2. As a result, books are better matched to pupils' phonic knowledge and their understanding. There is a need to ensure that books are equally suitably matched for the younger pupils, including in the early years.

External support

School leaders have engaged willingly with support from both within and outside of the trust. Work with the Devon and Cornwall Mathematics Hub has been particularly successful in raising standards.