

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Elizabeth Gunnion
Headteacher
Linacre Primary School
Thornton Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L20 5ED

Dear Miss Gunnion

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Linacre Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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:

- identify the knowledge that pupils need to know and the order in which this content is taught in geography, history and science
- support subject leaders further so that they can plan and check the delivery of new curriculums.

Context

Since the previous inspection, a new subject leader for mathematics has taken up post. A new chair of the governing body has been appointed.

Leaders' plans for improvement have been disrupted by the absence of the headteacher and other senior leaders for periods of time across the academic year due to COVID-19.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection in June 2019, you developed a shared vision of what needs to be done to move the school forward. The school improvement plan is underpinned by realistic timescales and success criteria to review progress. Despite the impact of the pandemic, you along with staff are making a positive difference to the quality of education that pupils receive.

You have placed a strong focus on improving pupils' reading skills. Staff training has been successful in ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and reading. Pupils who read to me used their phonics knowledge well to sound out unfamiliar words. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they are learning. Older pupils talked with enthusiasm about the books that they have read.

Following your review of the curriculum, you have implemented new curriculum plans in many subjects, including mathematics and art. These curriculums are planned in a logical order and outline the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. However, the curriculum plans in science, geography and history are not as far ahead as you would want them to be. Leaders are in the process of adapting these plans to identify what pupils need to learn and when they should gain this knowledge.

You are providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their vocabulary and stamina in writing. I saw some emerging examples of this in science and history books. However, due to the pandemic you have not been able to see the full impact of your efforts yet.

Teachers encourage pupils to develop their knowledge through clear explanations and address any misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils told me that they have opportunities to revisit prior knowledge across different subjects. This is helping them to apply what they know to new contexts. For example, pupils used their scientific knowledge to explain how light is reflected and transmitted through different materials.

You have provided training activities for leaders to develop their skills. This is beginning to help them to lead their areas of responsibility with greater confidence.

That said, subject leaders are still in the early stages of checking that the new curriculum plans are making a positive difference to pupils' learning.

You have changed the classroom organisation in the early years. You believe that is helping children to be better prepared for their next steps. You have taken appropriate action to ensure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes have more opportunities to develop their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds work well together. Pupils who are new to the school are warmly welcomed and quickly become part of the school family. Pupils are given more opportunities to develop their knowledge of British values, such as democracy, through class assemblies. Pupils told me that they enjoy participating in the school parliament. You have focused on improving pupils' attendance. You have introduced a more rigorous approach to following up absences. In addition, the range of rewards for good attendance are encouraging pupils to attend school more regularly than they did in the past.

Following the additional monitoring visit in January 2021, you were asked to improve some aspects of the delivery of remote education. You are providing more guidance for parents and carers on how to support their children's learning in the basic skills of English and mathematics. In addition, you developed ways to check the quality of teachers' assessments and the feedback that they gave to pupils.

Governors have the best interests of pupils and staff at the heart of their work. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well through regular meetings and reports from leaders. Governors support and challenge leaders effectively.

Additional support

You have used the support provided by the local authority and the English and mathematics Hubs to help you develop the early years provision and make some improvements to the curriculum. Support from a national leader of education (NLE) has enabled you to plan effectively in order to improve the quality of education across the school. Training for leaders has helped to develop the skills of senior and subject leaders. Your engagement with a multi-academy trust has been beneficial to leaders and staff when sharing ideas and expertise.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, subject leaders, pupils, four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the NLE supporting leaders. This was to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I made short visits to lessons, listened to pupils read, spoke with pupils and looked at work in their books. I examined a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and curriculum

plans. I checked the single central record of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also looked at 10 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 12 responses to Ofsted's 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 Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector