

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 August 2018

Mr Nigel Pantling
Headteacher
Salmestone Primary School
College Road
Margate
Kent
CT9 4DB

Dear Mr Pantling

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Salmestone Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 17 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 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.

Senior leaders and the trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement, identified at the recent section 5 inspection, in order for the academy to become good.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the senior and middle leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress were reviewed. Leaders and I visited a range of classrooms where I spoke to teachers and pupils. I evaluated a range of work in pupils' books. I met with the chair of the Thanet joint local governing body and with a representative of the trust.

Context

The current headteacher joined the school in January 2017. The school has had 10 leaders in six years. A large number of staff have left the school since the last inspection, including 10 teachers. There has been a restructure of leadership and management responsibilities since the last inspection.

Main findings

Staff, other leaders, and the trust members value the vision and stability that the current headteacher brings to the school. Leaders recognise that the vast number of school leaders over the years have all brought initiative and change. However, nothing has really had a chance to embed. Leaders are mindful of this when planning for school improvement. They are securing steady and systematic improvements, while avoiding initiative overload for staff.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving and is less variable. However, it remains too variable. Leaders know their school very well. The rich analysis of what is working well in classrooms, and what needs to improve, underpins leaders' highly personalised support for teachers. Staff value the consistent and constant support that they get to improve teaching. They appreciate working alongside middle leaders and being given regular opportunities to watch others teach and to practise new strategies in their classrooms. Leaders have created a strong culture of learning among staff.

Middle leadership has strengthened significantly since the last inspection. Senior and middle leaders now work as a united front to improve teaching and learning. Middle leaders value the training that they have had from the trust. For example, they value the support in managing difficult conversations with others about underperformance. They feel that there is now clarity and consistency from senior leaders. The teaching of mathematics and English is improving because leaders at all levels are giving clarity to teachers about what is expected.

Standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are steadily rising. However, the inconsistent quality of teaching in all key stages, including the early years, means that current pupils' progress remains variable in English and mathematics.

Leaders are improving the curriculum. They have ensured that it is broader and more balanced than at the last inspection. Leaders also know that teachers are not always clear enough about the knowledge, language and skills that pupils need to develop over time in subjects such as history and geography. Leaders are redesigning the curriculum for September 2018. They have spoken to pupils to both capture their aspirations for life beyond school and also to find out about the subjects and learning that they enjoy. Leaders have carefully mapped the progression of knowledge and skills that they want to see taught in all subjects.

However, it is too soon to evaluate the implementation and impact of the new curriculum.

Governance is improving. The trust reorganised local governance across the Thanet locality a year ago. The delegation of responsibility between tiers of governance is now clear. The Thanet joint local governing body provides effective support and challenge to senior leaders. For example, through the ongoing evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding. The function of the school-level governing committee is clear.

Leaders at all levels, and staff more widely, value the work of the trust. They respect the 'firm but fair' nature of the support and challenge to improve the school. Staff appreciate the increased visibility of regional trust staff and their commitment to securing stable leadership and sustained school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole

Her Majesty's Inspector