

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 July 2016

Mr R Veale
Atwood Primary Academy
Limpsfield Road
South Croydon
Surrey
CR2 9EE

Dear Mr Veale

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Atwood Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 7 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior leaders about wider issues related to the concerns which led to this inspection. I conducted a tour of the school with the leader for inclusion. This tour had a sharp focus on provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. During the tour, we looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. I met with a group of teachers and some pupils who are members of the school council. I also had a meeting with representatives of the governing body, after a scrutiny of the written records of the work of governors. I had discussions with the local authority. I also observed pupils at play and scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding, behaviour and school improvement. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside the school's own parent survey information.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere within the school both in lessons and when pupils are at play. Pupils say that bullying and other discriminatory behaviour are very rare. The school's own records indicate that pupils who have special educational needs or disability are very rarely the victims of this kind of behaviour. These records also reflect improvements in the behaviour of pupils whose needs include support for managing their own feelings.

Parents who responded to your own questionnaires and Parent View broadly agree that safeguarding is effective. The recently appointed school business manager has made the records on the checks for suitability of staff even better. They meet statutory requirements.

Senior leaders and governors consider specific risks related to the school environment and the wider community. For example, you are aware that the shape of the school playground means that supervision needs to be carefully considered.

Governors are introducing a systematic approach to checking that policies and training remain up to date. The school would benefit from further work in assessing the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. This would augment the training already completed in relation to the 'Prevent' duty.

The school has made good progress in improving the specific areas of focus for the inspection.

Context

Since your appointment as headteacher, you have conducted a thorough review of the structure of leadership. This has enabled leaders at all levels to take greater responsibility for driving improvements. You have recognised that pupils in some parts of the school, particularly in key stage 2, have been making slower progress than before. Outcomes for pupils in 2015 declined as a result. The changes you have introduced have enabled you and governors to hold teachers more fully to account for the impact of their work on pupils' learning. As a result, the school's information indicates that pupils in the current school year who have special educational needs or disability are making better progress. Most are making at least good progress from their varying starting points.

Your sharp and regular analysis of pupils' progress has enabled you to identify those pupils who have special educational needs or disability who should be making better progress in mathematics. You have made sure that a better range of resources are available and that teachers have been trained to use them effectively. The school's information about pupils currently in the school, together with work seen in books, indicates that outcomes are improving. However, the impact of this work has not been fully realised and this aspect of provision must remain a priority for improvement.

The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has worked successfully to strengthen procedures to identify suitable provision for them. She has ensured that additional checks are made so parents can receive timely and accurate information about identification and registration of pupils.

She has also developed a more effective network of support to help teachers improve their skills in meeting the needs of all pupils. For example, pupils whose special needs stem from their position on the autistic spectrum are better provided for as a result. The positive impact was evident in pupils' work sampled on inspection.

You make sure that leaders carry out regular and systematic checks on the quality of teaching. You have worked with governors to make sure that the wider leadership team is enhancing its skills in planning for improvement related to pupils who have special educational needs or disability. For example, one of your leaders has begun to participate in a national programme of training. Consequently, you have more accurate information on which to base decisions related to teacher training. Once this training has been provided, teachers are held more closely to account for successfully applying it in the classroom. You monitor the progress of pupils carefully. However, more could be done to use this information when evaluating the work of teachers and providing them with objectives for improvement.

You have taken steps to find out what other local schools are doing successfully in relation to provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. This is strengthening the provision in your own school. Your own school has also developed the capacity to showcase expertise to the wider educational community. For example, you recently hosted an event to help others understand how to support pupils who are electively mute.

Your partnerships with experts and advisers outside the school are strong. They add to the knowledge and skills which are at your disposal when considering plans for improvement. For example, educational psychologists provide valuable opportunities for support staff to reflect on their work in supporting pupils with emotional difficulties.

Plans for improvement related to pupils who have special educational needs or disability are sharply focused on improving outcomes and well considered. Timescales for expecting a positive impact from these plans are realistic. Your measures of success are clear and based on practical matters. For example, you have taken steps to relocate some additional provision to provide a space for pupils to reflect on their emotions or calm down. This has had the impact of making them feel more included. Further, training that you have provided to help teachers understand how to support pupils with emotional difficulties has reduced the number and frequency of most serious behaviour incidents.

Your plans for improvement have also been sharply focused on improving the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, the gap between the attendance of this group and other pupils has narrowed. In some year groups, including Year 6, pupils who have special educational needs or disability now attend much better than other pupils.

Senior leaders and governors rightly realised that procedures for handling complaints needed to be strengthened. They have learned important lessons from issues brought to their attention. As a result, the current procedures for handling complaints have improved. In particular, arrangements for tackling concerns in an informal manner as soon as they are brought to light, are more effective. Governors have taken steps to raise their profile in the school community. Parents can put a face to a name more easily. Pupils and members of staff say that small concerns are now less likely to grow into big issues as a result of these improvements. The number of formal complaints received by senior leaders and governors is very low.

Priorities for further improvement

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- checks on the quality of teaching focus sharply on the impact of lessons on outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- leaders continue to focus on improving the skills of teachers in helping pupils who have special educational needs or disability overcome barriers to learning in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector