

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 May 2023

Anne Sheridan
Headteacher
Overchurch Junior School
Moreton Road
Upton
Wirral
Merseyside
CH49 4NS

Dear Mrs Sheridan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Overchurch Junior School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I met with the member of staff responsible for maintaining the safeguarding checks on staff. I carried out visits to lessons and observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. I also met with other staff and carried out work and other document scrutiny, including documents connected to safeguarding, the curriculum, the school improvement plan and records of governing body meetings. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Overchurch Junior School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers know how to identify and address missing knowledge that pupils have in their learning due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or from previously

weak subject curriculums. This includes knowledge that should have been learned in key stage 1.

- make sure that the revised subject curriculums are fully implemented so that pupils build their knowledge well over time and are able to make sense of new learning.

Main findings

Several members of staff have left the school since the previous inspection. You have replaced these with a number of new staff, including two members of staff who are at an early stage of their careers. You have restructured the leadership team. The senior leadership team now includes the leader with responsibility for overseeing the curriculum and the English leader.

Since the last inspection, you have designed an ambitious and coherent reading curriculum. This sets out a systematic approach to teaching pupils to read. You have made sure that staff know how to deliver this curriculum consistently and well. Pupils who struggle to read, including some pupils who are disadvantaged and some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), now receive effective support to help them to catch up quickly. This includes regular opportunities to practise reading using books that are carefully matched to their reading knowledge. These pupils are becoming more fluent readers as a result.

You and other leaders have set about redesigning the curriculum in those subjects where improvements were needed. The curriculum in these subjects is now ambitious and carefully ordered. It outlines the core knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. You have provided curriculum leaders with the training that they need to lead their subjects successfully. These leaders now make sure that teachers have the guidance that they need to deliver ambitious subject curriculums consistently and well.

You have also made sure that effective approaches to assessing what pupils know are in place. Typically, teachers check that pupils remember essential knowledge before they introduce new learning. They make sure that pupils revisit their recent learning regularly. However, some pupils have long-standing gaps in their knowledge as a result of previous weaknesses in some curriculums or from missed learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils can recall new learning, but they are not secure when talking about what they have learned in the past. In addition, the curriculums are relatively new in some subjects. Pupils have not built their knowledge well over time in these subjects. This makes it more difficult for some pupils to make sense of new learning.

You have worked closely with those responsible for governance to identify the right priorities for improvement. Your plans to address these priorities are well thought out. You have restructured leadership roles to help you build further capacity to address areas for improvement. Other leaders, governors and staff are highly committed to the improvements that you are making.

You have made the most of all the support available to you from a range of external partners, including the local authority and a multi-academy trust. This has helped you to develop curriculum leaders' expertise and improve teachers' subject knowledge. You have been tenacious in securing support from an English hub. This means that staff are now better able to teach pupils to read. You have made sure that this support is managed well. Staff said that they receive the help that they need while their workloads are kept manageable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Wirral local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Stillings
His Majesty's Inspector