

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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28 September 2016

Mrs Jayne Mercer  
Headteacher  
Fairfield Endowed CofE (C) Junior School  
Boarstone Lane  
Fairfield  
Buxton  
Derbyshire  
SK17 7NA

Dear Mrs Mercer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fairfield Endowed CofE (C) Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, four representatives of the governing body, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. I considered a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and the latest self-evaluation document. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited all classes to see pupils and staff at work. I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.

## **Context**

Since I visited the school in December 2014, the previous headteacher has left to take up a new post. You were appointed as headteacher in January 2016. A new deputy headteacher was appointed at the same time.

## **Main findings**

Since your appointment, you have set out and communicated a clear and determined vision to staff, pupils and parents. You know the school well and are aware of the remaining challenges that the school faces to become a good school by the time of the next section 5 inspection. As a result, the school improvement plan is focused on the correct areas for improvement.

Senior leaders are setting high expectations and all staff understand that teaching must be of a high quality. A comprehensive programme of training and support is ensuring that teaching is, in almost all cases, now good. Consequently, current school information and work in pupils' books shows that from their starting points pupils are making good progress in writing and mathematics.

Pupils do not always make such good progress in reading. This is a focus for school improvement. Recent initiatives such as class novels, an increased emphasis on reading at home and the appointment of Year 6 librarians to improve the use of the school library, are successfully motivating pupils to read independently and nurturing a passion for reading.

At the time of my last visit in December 2014, the previous headteacher had begun to foster closer links with the feeder infant school. You are continuing to develop this. For example, both schools are now using the same assessment and tracking systems and there are increasing opportunities for shared training, as well as for staff to moderate pupils' work together.

There are clear procedures in place to ensure that subject leaders effectively monitor their subject areas and the progress that pupils are making. As a result, subject leaders know what is working well and what still needs improving.

Attitudes to learning were positive in every classroom we visited; the behaviour of the pupils seen was consistently good. Pupils were clearly engaged in and enjoying their learning.

Governors are committed and know the school well. The milestones identified in some sections of the school improvement plan are helping them to know what success will look like and how it will be measured at several points over the coming year. We agreed that you will review the plan and identify clear milestones in each section in order to ensure that improvement is happening as fast as necessary.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority is continuing to work closely with the school. Staff have responded positively to the training and support received from consultants and consequently teaching has improved. The diocese is also providing a range of effective support, including, for example, training for governors. There is effective joint planning and communication between the local authority, the diocese and school leaders which serves the best interests of pupils. This effective support is strengthening the school's capacity for further improvement and increasingly the school is driving its own improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**