

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 July 2022

Tuesday Rhodes
Headteacher
Sheffield Inclusion Centre
Spring Lane
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 2JQ

Dear Miss Rhodes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sheffield Inclusion Centre

Following my visit to your school on 5 July 2022, 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 three 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 ongoing 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:

The school continues to require improvement. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action toward the school becoming a good school.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded the number of sites over which it operates. It now has 10 'bases' across the city. Also, since the previous section 5 inspection, there has been substantial change in numerous leadership responsibilities. There is a new deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers, and new subject leads in mathematics, science and vocational courses. Each of the new bases has a new leader. New appointments have been made for the leadership of English and special educational needs and/or disabilities, due to commence in September 2022. A new management committee has been formed, including a new chair, vice-chair and elected members of Sheffield's city council.

Leaders' plans for improvement have been slowed to a notable degree by the impact of COVID-19. This is particularly the case, for instance, in the implementation of the new phonics strategy. The pandemic's impact has also limited the extent to which leaders' curriculum plans have been fully brought to fruition.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection and your appointment, you have rightly raised the bar for the ambition of what pupils can achieve at your school. While remaining fully committed to the need for high quality pastoral care for your pupils, you have correctly set new expectations for the standard of teaching, of teaching support, and the content of the subject curriculum. You are fully supported in this by the management committee and the local authority (LA).

You have taken necessary action to improve the quality of your reading curriculum. You are in the process of implementing a new phonics scheme, which will be in place in September 2022. All relevant staff have been trained by one of the scheme's verified trainers. The speed with which you have been able to complete staff training has been delayed by COVID-19. To further support the effective implementation of the scheme, you are in the process of purchasing reading books which will align exactly with the scheme.

Your provision for developing pupils' wider reading skills, beyond phonics decoding, is already in place, with additional provision planned for September. The leader with responsibility for reading is planning on working closely with the incoming special educational needs coordinator to further implement strategies to improve pupils' reading and their broader literacy skills. There is a clear connection between these plans and leaders' ambition to prepare your pupils for their adult lives.

You have been working effectively to improve the quality of teaching, and teaching support. In the lessons we visited, we saw some strong subject knowledge from teachers and teaching assistants. In these cases, teachers are confidently using subject-specific vocabulary, and encouraging pupils to use it too. As a result, pupils are rising to staffs' expectations of what they can achieve. For instance, we saw pupils eager to learn about

electronic circuit boards, about the workings of the heart and about how to structure a story with interesting language and grammatical devices.

You have taken effective action to begin implementing a new subject curriculum. It is a work in progress, but it is well under way. The curriculum is fully planned in some subjects, such as mathematics, science and design and technology. The curriculum content in these subjects is increasingly planned in a sequenced, cumulative manner, drawing on the national curriculum as the benchmark. Curriculum plans show that leaders have identified the main topic areas and have organised these into a coherent sequence so that pupils' learning is not jumbled up. There is some variability in the extent to which the finer details of subject knowledge are identified with clarity within the main topics. You are aware of this, however, and are working with your LA adviser to ensure that all plans are sufficiently clear about precisely what content is to be taught.

There is some variability in leaders' and teachers' understanding of the organising principle of how the curriculum is structured to account for pupils with gaps in foundation subject knowledge. For instance, some staff think the curriculum is organised by a pupil's age, while some think the curriculum is based on a pupil's level of understanding when they join the school. This means that at times, in different bases, staff have a different understanding of how the curriculum should be applied to fill gaps in pupils' learning. You acknowledge this, and will continue to work with your LA adviser to iron out these wrinkles.

You have taken appropriate action to adjust your assessment system, having determined that the system in place at the previous section 5 inspection was not fit for purpose. This is because you realised that your new curriculum strategy is not served well by the legacy assessment system. The new approach to assessment is based on staff using a variety of means, such as the use of questions and low-stakes tests, knowledge organisers, discussion and whiteboard responses, to establish what pupils know and can do. There is more work to do to really nail down how staff and leaders will identify precisely which parts of the subject curriculum have been grasped by pupils, once the new curriculum is fully implemented.

At the previous section 5 inspection, you were asked to improve arrangements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) curriculum. You have started to implement an 'entitlement' curriculum to enhance pupils' experiences, such as through trips and a planned residential visit. You have also started to keep track of where aspects of SMSC are covered in the subject curriculum. Currently this is left to individual teachers to determine, from a list of SMSC descriptors. While this is a start and reflects your determination to have a grip on pupils' SMSC development, it would be more effective if you required staff to identify from the outset in their curriculum planning what elements of SMSC they will address. In this way, you will know from the start which aspects of your SMSC curriculum are to be covered, and how balanced this provision is across subjects.

You were asked to improve pupils' attendance. It is recognised that for a substantial number of your pupils, good attendance is a particularly challenging expectation. You and

your colleagues are tireless in trying to bring about improvements to cases of entrenched, stubborn habits of poor attendance. However, your strategy of introducing the 'bases' approach has led to a marked improvement in attendance. In addition, it is clear that pupils are beginning to respond positively to the richer and more ambitious subject curriculum. You are taking effective action to further improve pupils' attendance.

Finally, you have been putting measures in place to capture the views of staff. The management committee has supported you in this process. Primarily, this has been through the half-termly staff voice group. You have also conducted two surveys to elicit the views of staff, with follow-up work planned for September 2022.

Additional support

You are working closely with an adviser from the local authority. You described how much you value this support and challenge, and how much you expect to continue to do so. This support has been especially useful in helping you to think through, and begin to implement, your curriculum plans.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the headteacher. I also met with other senior leaders, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited several lessons and listened to some pupils read. I visited one of the school's other bases and looked at examples of pupils' books. I looked at curriculum plans in a range of subjects. I met with safeguarding leaders to discuss the school's safer recruitment practices and the single central record.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Shaw
Her Majesty's Inspector