

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



23 June 2021

Pauline Turner  
Thrapston Primary School  
Market Road  
Thrapston  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN14 4JU

Dear Mrs Turner

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thrapston Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 May 2021, 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 two 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 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:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- complete work to improve curriculum plans, so that knowledge is clearly identified and sequenced in all subjects.

## **Context**

Leaders understand the pressures that COVID-19 has placed on families. As a result, they have increased the pastoral support they provide to improve pupils' mental health and well-being.

Since the school's most recent section 5 inspection, a number of staff have left the school. An assistant headteacher has been appointed, as well as a leader for early years. There is a new chair of the governing body. Most governors are new to their roles.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have acted decisively to improve the school's curriculum. In some subjects, they have set out what they want pupils to know and remember, starting from early years. In design technology for example, teachers have a secure understanding of what they need to teach and in what order. The quality of pupils' work has improved in these subjects.

Senior leaders have supported subject leaders to plan the curriculum. They make sure that most teachers develop the expertise needed to drive improvements across the curriculum. However, there is more work to do to make sure that all subject leaders develop a well-sequenced curriculum. For example, in modern foreign languages, religious education and art, leaders have not made clear the knowledge that pupils should learn and when.

Making sure that pupils learn to read is a priority for the school. Staff deliver phonics teaching consistently well. Pupils who need support get extra sessions to help them catch up. Pupils work well in phonics sessions and most can remember the sounds that they learn. Teachers make sure that the books pupils read match their phonics knowledge.

The special educational needs coordinator works with teachers to help them adapt the curriculum to support pupils. She has developed a set of strategies and ideas for each subject. Teachers use these to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same lesson content as other pupils. Staff appreciate this guidance and support. Leaders are beginning to check on the impact of this work.

Pupils told us that teachers help them remember their learning by identifying the key vocabulary and knowledge they need to learn. Pupils can recall key facts about their learning in history lessons, including from previous school years. For example, pupils remembered recent learning about the Second World War as well as the dates of the Tudor period.

Governors regularly hold leaders to account. They, like leaders, want the best for pupils. Governors understand that leaders' work to develop the curriculum is central to school improvement. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Governors fulfil their statutory duties for safeguarding.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They value the high levels of care and support their children receive. A typical parental comment was, 'I feel truly blessed that my children attend the school.' Parents are particularly positive about the support that pupils with SEND receive.

Leaders' development plans place the curriculum and pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's improvement journey. However, priorities in reading need to be set out more clearly, so that nothing is left to chance. For example, leaders' plans do not identify the work that leaders are doing to improve pupils' fluency in reading.

### **Additional support**

The local authority provides support and challenge to help leaders address weaker areas of the curriculum. Representatives of the local authority have checked the impact of leaders' work and provided guidance on developing the curriculum.

Leaders have been successful in securing three days' support from a national leader of education, as part of the Department for Education's Trust and School Improvement Offer.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior and curriculum leaders, pupils, staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons and observed pupils reading to a member of staff. I reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 96 free-text comments, and 42 staff questionnaires. I reviewed the school's plans for improvement, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the local authority. I scrutinised the single central register of pre-employment checks.

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

Yours sincerely

Damien Turrell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**