

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 April 2017

Mrs Suzanne Chapman
Acting Headteacher
Harlow Green Community Primary School
Harlow Green Lane
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE9 7TB

Dear Mrs Chapman

Short inspection of Harlow Green Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Working alongside a talented and supportive governing body, your skilful leadership has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. There is a tangible drive and sense of urgency to provide high-quality opportunities which allow pupils to thrive, an ambition shared by all staff. You have identified and evaluated the school's strengths and current priorities, and detailed further actions to address these priorities in the comprehensive and perceptive school development plan.

You have brought an experienced and steady hand during recent changes in leadership. Improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now accelerating quickly the rates of progress of current pupils across the school. You, governors and other school leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. You have empowered the leaders of mathematics and English to take full responsibility for their subjects, which has brought a fresh focus and energy to improving provision. You acknowledge that the many whole-school initiatives and strategies to further improve teaching are not yet fully impacting on outcomes for pupils in reading and mathematics, mainly in key stage 2.

Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and good relationships with adults remain key strengths of your inclusive school. Pupils develop good citizenship skills, being keen to take on responsibilities through roles such as 'class monitor', looking after the school hens and being a member of the eco-warriors or the school council. They

take great pride in the well-ordered school environment both inside and outside, benefiting from quality displays in classes and shared areas. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school remains exemplary. They take great pride if chosen to wear the 'special person' badge for the day. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, and most are very eager to work hard.

The school has many strategies to encourage and celebrate pupils' regular and punctual attendance, including the work undertaken by the family support worker and a range of class and individual prizes. However, you recognise that currently these are having minimal impact on improving the attendance of a large group of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, some of whom are regularly and persistently absent.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching so that it was of a consistently high standard across school. This has been tackled with resolve. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to respond to teachers' feedback, completing further challenges to consolidate their learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils are very high. There are many opportunities for pupils to write, completing activities linked to their topic or the class novel. Pupils in Year 4 wrote at length to describe the digestive system, while Year 6 pupils explained how the centaurs felt about Jason, using a piece of text from 'Jason and the Argonauts'.

You recognise the benefits of team working to develop your staff members. You provide regular opportunities for staff to refine their skills by working in small groups with others who demonstrate good practice. As a result, continual improvements are made to increase the quality and consistency of teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

In your role of designated safeguarding leader you ensure that policies, procedures and records are of high quality and up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are meticulously kept using the new online system. The recent safeguarding audit by an external consultant highlights the school's strength in this area, acknowledging leaders' determination to leave no stone unturned in its duty to keep pupils safe.

There are very few records of behaviour incidents or alleged bullying and the pupils with whom I spoke categorically stated that no bullying happens at Harlow Green Primary. Each class teacher maintains a behaviour incidents file, which records very minor and occasional misdemeanours.

All staff are appropriately trained and have access to well-written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding. Pupils are very knowledgeable about bullying and e-safety. Pupils know how to stay safe and free from worries while in school. They understand how to avoid situations that may prove dangerous when not at school.

The culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of the friendly school community is very evident. The personal development and welfare of all pupils are key areas of focus for the school, supported well by the work of the family support worker. The vast majority of parents and carers report that their children are both happy and very safe in school when responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection findings

- You have taken determined and rigorous actions to accelerate the progress of current pupils in light of the results for Year 6 pupils in the school's 2016 national assessments in reading and mathematics, with which you were disappointed. Work seen in pupils' books during the inspection and analysis of the school's tracking data clearly demonstrate strong progress over the autumn term for nearly all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are skilled in their roles to which they bring a range of transferable, professional skills. They know the school very well and understand the journey it has taken to reach this point. Governors are proud of the school, its blossoming reputation locally and the improvements already in place. Governors are very well informed and have individual links to key areas of school. They take nothing at face value and question and challenge very effectively.
- Children make a fast start in their learning in the early years. They play and learn happily together. Children's behaviour is excellent and they show independence and good manners. Children benefit from well-led adult activities, and enjoy time to explore and learn for themselves. For example, one Nursery child observed was fascinated when talking with an adult about how a potato grows, while examining its 'eye'.
- Children in Reception are making increasingly rapid progress in their understanding of number and in their reading and writing skills, with the proportion achieving a good level of development being above that found nationally.
- Pupils get off to a good start in reading. The systematic and rigorous teaching of phonics starts in Nursery and moves into Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read well to the inspector and were able to build and blend unknown words. The effective teaching of phonics continues across key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was above average.
- Teachers pitch work well to match pupils' abilities, including for the most able pupils. Pupils in Year 5 were using the class novel 'The wolf wilder' to explore the writer's use of language. They were able to find a range of literary devices from simple and complex sentences to adverbial phrases.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to use their developing English skills in extended writing activities. Pupils in Year 2 were working cooperatively, sharing and justifying predictions from pictures linked to their class novel, 'The rainbow bear'.

- Work in pupils' books is much improved since the start of the year. Pupils present their work extremely well with neatly formed, legible joined handwriting. A group of pupils told me how proud they are of how much they have improved.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows how increasingly confident they are when solving problems, justifying and explaining their answers. Pupils' enjoyment of mathematics is obvious and for many it is their favourite subject. Pupils are becoming more secure in their fluency in number and calculation skills, completing activities linked to the 'rocket challenge'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- agreed initiatives and actions to further improve teaching impact positively on outcomes for pupils in reading and mathematics in key stage 2
- the rates of attendance for all pupils improve quickly, and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent falls, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the family support worker and members of the governing body. I also met with the leaders of mathematics and English. You and I visited lessons in each key stage. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, and looked in their books both in lessons and in meetings. I listened to some pupils read. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding, performance management, governors' meetings and external evaluations of the school. I also considered the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan, the curriculum and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in statutory assessments and the school's website.