

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



29 January 2016

Mrs Karen Stuart
Headteacher
Overdale Infant School
Eastcourt Road
Knighton
Leicester
LE2 3YA

Dear Mrs Stuart

Short inspection of Overdale Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2016, 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 October 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

At the time of the inspection, you had only been in post as headteacher for two weeks. You have wasted no time in starting to get to know the school's strengths and finding out where improvements can be made. You have already worked closely with staff to establish the key features of the school that they hold dear: these include teamwork, treating all pupils as individuals, welcoming parents into school and fostering strong links with the community, as well as finding out what they would like to see made even better.

There have been some changes to staffing over the past 12 months. Governors worked very effectively to support the acting headteacher during this time. Governors and leaders are also aware that, over time, the context of Overdale Infant School is changing. Pupil mobility has risen over recent years and the proportion of pupils who speak little or no English when they arrive at the school has steadily increased.

Governors and school leaders have successfully addressed the key issues from the previous inspection report. For example, during our tour of classrooms, we saw pupils using their skills in mathematics to solve problems. They were able to explain the strategies they were using and describe clearly how they used equipment to help them work out the answer. Pupils' workbooks showed that they have

opportunities to write at length. Leaders have also introduced initiatives for parents to come into school and write with their children. Teachers provide useful feedback about each child's writing so parents know how to help their child improve even further.

This initiative is a feature of the warm and welcoming culture at Overdale Infant School. Every parent who expressed a view through the online survey, Parent View, said their child is happy at the school. On the day of the inspection, one of the Reception classes was hosting a drop-in session for parents. Parents have opportunities in all classes to come into school and work alongside their children. You and your senior leaders know that these sessions are regularly well attended. Although you have been in post for a short time, you are already building on this culture of openness and partnership. You greet parents and pupils in the morning and make yourself readily available to them.

The local authority's view is that the school only requires light-touch support. This is because the local authority judges it as a good school and has faith in the leadership team. A different adviser has recently been allocated to the school by the local authority. You have welcomed the offer of two additional visits to challenge and support you, as a newly appointed headteacher, during your first year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of the highest importance for you and the governors. Staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding procedures and know what to do if a concern arises. Senior leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements and related record keeping are fit for purpose.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They told me that their teachers have taught them how to keep safe when they are using the internet. They were able to speak knowledgeably about this, in a way that was very appropriate for their age. Pupils are confident that staff will take care of them and help them with any worries they may have. They told me, 'We all look after each other.' Every parent who expressed a view said their child feels safe and parents I spoke to have confidence in school staff to look after their children.

Inspection findings

- As a newly appointed headteacher, you are determined to build on the well-established strengths of the school. You have made an immediate start to this by consulting with staff about their views of the school. You have already worked with your senior leaders to begin to establish what can be done to improve the school further. For example, you have looked at the detailed action plans that school leaders have written to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility. You and the governors recognise that the school's strategic development plan would benefit from having the same level of detail seen in these individual action plans so that progress against agreed actions can be monitored more closely. You are keen to improve the provision for most-able pupils so that they can achieve even more highly by

the time they leave the school. You have also rightly recognised that recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are already having a positive impact.

- Governance is a real strength of Overdale Infant School. The governors know the school very well. They make sure they do not simply accept what school leaders tell them, but instead they take time to ask challenging questions and interrogate information more deeply. This includes information about pupils' outcomes. They are fully aware of the actions leaders are taking to improve the teaching of phonics, and they ask searching questions during their visits to the school. They check that suggested improvements have been acted on. The governors have begun to further improve their methods of monitoring the school's performance and reporting their findings to the full board. The Chair of the Governing Body took an active role in supporting the acting headteacher last year, making sure that she had the support and guidance she needed to fulfil her role.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers' plans are available on the school's website for parents to see what their child will be learning about. Opportunities for learning about living in modern Britain are built into the curriculum. Plans are afoot to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday with a school picnic. The school supports the promotion of fundamental British values well. There is a democratically elected school council which has visited the town hall to meet the mayor. The councillors organised a competition for the other pupils to encourage use of the library and they also had an important role to play last term during the appointment of the school's new headteacher.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics is broadly in line with national expectations. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the required standard in phonics was higher in 2015 than in the previous year. In writing, in 2015, there was a slight dip in the previously better-than-average outcomes and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected levels in all subjects was lower than in previous years. In addition, in 2015, fewer pupils than usual achieved the higher level in all subjects. School leaders, including governors, recognised the reasons for the unusual dip last year. They immediately put in place strategies to make sure that pupils make the best possible progress. For example, two teachers have recently joined a local group to share and develop good practice in mathematics. Pupils' books show that they are making good progress so far this year. I saw in phonics lessons, for example, that the recently implemented strategies are having a positive impact. However, most-able pupils say that the work in mathematics is sometimes easy for them to complete.
- There is a clear system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The teacher with responsibility for assessment has provided staff with training to make sure that they continue to develop their understanding and ability to use the system effectively. Senior leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to monitor the progress of pupils. The Chair of the Governing Body attended one of these meetings to see things for himself. He was very impressed with the detailed discussions that took place. You recognise,

however, that there is room to improve this aspect further, by looking even more closely at specific groups of pupils to make sure that any interventions that could accelerate progress are put in place without delay.

- In the lessons we saw, pupils were fully engaged in the interesting learning activities that the teachers had planned for them. Pupils were making good use of the equipment that teachers had provided to support their learning. Pupils were well supported by teaching assistants in class to be able to complete the work that had been set for them. Teachers and teaching assistants alike gave very clear explanations to pupils and asked open questions to make sure that pupils could explain their thinking.
- In the early years, we saw children working together very well, thoroughly enjoying the challenge of finding materials with different characteristics. Even though science was the main focus of this lesson, the teacher grasped every opportunity to develop children's early reading skills by sharing cards that said 'smooth', 'bumpy', etc. as they discussed the characteristics. Speaking and listening were further developed as children described the objects they had found.
- Pupils behave well both in classrooms and around school. They cooperate well together in their lessons. The school is a calm environment and pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly fashion. They readily hold doors open for each other and were very keen to politely welcome a visitor to their school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's development plan is sufficiently detailed so that governors can rigorously hold school leaders to account
- senior leaders and governors use the information from the revised approach to assessment to check more closely the progress of different groups of pupils and take swift action, where required, to secure good progress for all pupils.
- they improve outcomes for most-able pupils by making sure that they are suitably challenged and supported to achieve the high levels they are capable of.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I held meetings with you and the senior leadership team. I met with three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I spoke informally to parents as they arrived at school in the morning and took account of their views that were either passed to me or posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils. I visited most classrooms with either you or the deputy headteacher to see the learning that was taking place. I examined a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, school improvement and assessment information.