

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



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Mr John Tomlinson
Headteacher
Romiley Primary School
Sandy Lane
Romiley
Stockport
Cheshire
SK6 4NE

Dear Mr Tomlinson

Short inspection of Romiley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 June 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your arrival in September 2014, you have established a very clear vision for the school, building on previous success and strengthening the school further. Staff, parents, pupils and governors are all highly appreciative of your friendly, inclusive approach and rightly hold you in high regard. You have instilled a clarity of purpose among staff and established high expectations for pupils.

Middle leaders feel empowered and fully embrace their accountability for all pupils' learning. The vast majority of parents are positive about all aspects of school and would recommend the school to others. Parents particularly appreciate that you are friendly and approachable; for example, several commented on how you are regularly at the gates to greet them and pupils in the morning, 'whatever the weather', and that you are always willing to listen to parents' views and opinions. It is clear, from only my short time with you, that this is a happy, purposeful school where pupils, parents and staff have a real sense of belonging.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has accelerated across the school but you are not complacent and are keen to ensure all pupils make equally strong progress, particularly those that are disadvantaged and the most-able pupils. Disadvantaged pupils, in particular, make slower progress in reading, writing and

mathematics than you would like. You are keeping a close eye on these groups and there is evidence that gaps are beginning to close.

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has developed considerably. Pupils respond well to a wide variety of interesting and engaging topics. The way that you and your staff have linked reading, writing and mathematical skills across the whole curriculum has not only helped pupils practise these skills in a variety of ways but also helps make the lessons stimulating, vibrant and fun. As one pupil said, 'I love to learn, it is fun.' There is the same high expectation and consistency of presentation, writing quality and marking across all curriculum areas.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to raise attainment and progress in English and mathematics by ensuring greater consistency in teachers' planning and in providing all pupils with tasks that were challenging. They also required the school to have greater consistency in marking so pupils had a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Leaders have addressed all of these aspects effectively so that:

- All staff are now planning their lessons with a high level of consistency across the school. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils well to match activities to the different abilities and needs in their class. There is a high level of challenge in all lessons.
- Marking is now also consistent across the whole school. Pupils in every class are clear about what they have done well and what they could do to improve. Opportunities are given for all pupils to respond to the comments that are made about their work and often teachers will add extra challenge in their comments to encourage pupils to stretch a bit further in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is robust. There are good systems in place in all areas of safeguarding and these are understood by staff. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and up to date. There are effective relationships with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school. They are confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the ways that staff have taught them to keep safe, and made particular reference to the 'SMART' motto which reminds them of the things they need to do to keep themselves safe online. The vast majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep their children safe and well looked after. As a result, pupils are very happy and keen to come to school.

Inspection findings

- You have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that need further development. Your school's self-evaluation and development documents are honest and transparent. They are presented in a succinct

way that makes it very clear what the school's priorities need to be. You have a very reflective, measured approach to leadership which is evident from the many ideas you have for further improvements while understanding that you must prioritise what needs to be done first. Everyone in school is clear about the direction they are heading and, as a result, you and your leadership team have very good capacity for further improvement.

- You have ensured that you know each teacher's strengths and areas for development accurately; as a result you are confident about who your strong teachers are and who still needs some support and nurturing. Your watchword is consistency. This is evident throughout the whole school, whether it is in terms of ethos, high expectations, challenge or the quality of display and pupils' work books.
- Governors play an active and informed role in evaluating the school's effectiveness and know the school very well. You are well supported by this strong governing body which is, equally, rigorous in its challenge where needed, but also happy to celebrate the many successes in school.
- The information you gather about pupils' progress is of a high quality. It is used by all leaders and governors very effectively to identify which pupils or groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. Middle leaders are fully involved in this process and talk confidently about pupils' learning in their subject areas. Your termly pupil progress meetings ensure that all staff feel responsible for every pupil's learning and give them an opportunity to reflect on how they could further adapt their teaching to meet their pupils' needs. I was impressed by how you and the whole school community have embraced the new way of assessing pupils this year and the opportunities that you have taken up to work with other schools to check these assessments are accurate.
- You identified that one of your priority areas for development was to improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in your school. To this end, you have taken decisive action including appointing a senior member of staff to keep a close eye on the needs and progress of these pupils. This has been well received by staff and is already having an impact on speeding up the progress of this group of pupils.
- Attendance is above the national average. You have good systems for monitoring attendance, absence and punctuality. There are a range of rewards for good attendance that are well supported by staff and result in good attendance having a high profile in school. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school and those that have been in the past have been very well supported, resulting in significantly improved attendance.
- Personal development, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness remains a strength of the school. Behaviour is impeccable and pupils are polite, kind and thoughtful to each other. There are many opportunities for pupils to enjoy a range of out-of-school activities and the school brass band, which many Key Stage 2 pupils are involved in, is outstanding.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to provide highly engaging and motivating learning activities in class. All lessons are planned with a high

level of challenge for all pupils and every opportunity is taken by teachers to explore and deepen learning whenever possible. Pupils told me that they love challenge because it is fun. Where pupils make mistakes, these are used positively by teachers to provide an opportunity to develop learning further. As a result, pupils are very comfortable about getting something wrong; as one pupil said, 'we learn from our mistakes'.

- The quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is of a high standard. Topics and themes are extremely well thought out to bring learning alive and fuel pupils' curiosity. Every opportunity is offered to practise English and mathematical skills. For example, Year 4 pupils who were studying the Romans were learning how we have many Latin words or parts of words in our own language.
- When you arrived at the school, one of your first priorities was to develop the learning and provision in early years. You and the team have done this very effectively. There has been a very positive impact on the environment inside and out and the quality of activities that are offered to children. Children move around the provision purposefully and they are well supported in their learning. However, I agree with you that increasing the challenge in all areas of learning would further increase the opportunity for all children to get the best start.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to keep a close eye on improving further the attainment and progress of the small but significant group of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school
- teachers are provided with more opportunities to learn from each other and share best practice
- they increase the challenge in early years provision so that children get the best start to their school career.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy, and members of your middle leadership team. I also met with pupils and two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of Stockport local authority. We visited 12 lessons, attended part of an assembly, and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of 101 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I observed pupils' behaviour during the school day. I looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' achievement, your school self-evaluation and school improvement plan and documents and checks relating to safeguarding.