

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 April 2016

Mrs Amarjit Cheema
Executive Headteacher
Perry Hall Primary School
Colman Avenue
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV11 3RT

Dear Mrs Cheema

Short inspection of Perry Hall Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 March 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

The predecessor school, Perry Hall Primary School, converted to an academy in July 2013. In 2014, it became part of the Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust and the trust took on responsibility for Berrybrook Primary School. Currently, Perry Hall Primary School is providing support to two other local primary schools.

This school continues to be good.

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

In fact, during this short inspection, I gave careful consideration as to whether the school would be likely to be judged outstanding if it were to receive a full inspection at this time. This is because there are several significant strengths, notably: considerable improvements in pupils' achievement in mathematics, the quality of leadership and management and the excellent provision in the early years.

Strong leadership has brought about many improvements since the previous inspection. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and make sure that everyone receives the support and challenge that they need to do their best. However, there is still a bit more to do in order to make sure that all pupils, and especially boys and disadvantaged pupils, do as well as possible in English.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures at Perry Hall Primary School are a model of exemplary practice. All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out with thorough attention, and record-keeping is meticulous and very well organised. Everyone understands that the safety and well-being of the children is the number one priority. When staff have had cause to act in response to a concern about a child, they have done so with well-informed regard for all the proper processes.

First-aid arrangements are very well organised. Lunchtime supervisors carry simple first-aid equipment and have been trained in how to use it. Any playground bumps that do occur are dealt with promptly and without fuss. The school site is kept secure and pupils report that they feel safe at school and that the adults will always help them, if need be.

Inspection findings

- This is a successful school with many notable strengths. Since it converted to an academy, standards have risen and the quality of teaching has continued to go from strength to strength. It is clear that the academy is on its way towards becoming an outstanding school, although it is not quite there yet. In a nutshell, progress in English, especially writing, is not yet keeping pace with the progress made in mathematics.
- Key factors in the school's continued success are the strength, vision and ambition of the school's leadership. As the executive headteacher, you provide focused and well-informed leadership. You put the well-being and achievement of the pupils at the heart of the school's aims and actions, and make sure that everyone does their best. Together with the head of school, you provide firm direction and set high expectations. You have established consistent routines and deployed staff carefully so that everyone's expertise is used to best effect. You have built a capable leadership team with a wide and impressive range of skills that serve the staff and pupils well. Senior leaders have an excellent overview of teaching and learning in the school, gathered through many different checks on classroom practice and pupils' work. All in all, the leadership and management at the school are exceptionally well organised and efficient.
- Governance is also well informed and ambitious. On top of this, the direction provided by the multi-academy board of trustees has ensured that standards at Perry Hall have continued to improve while the academy has been supporting other schools. In fact, working with other schools has brought benefits to all. It has allowed governors to employ and share a wider range of resources and expertise than might otherwise be available.
- Across the school, teaching is consistently good and there is some excellent practice in places. It is clear that the school team has given careful thought to the skills that pupils need at different ages and stages in their education. It is equally clear that teaching in one year group builds carefully on what

has gone on in previous years. The attention given to the teaching of key basic skills in the early years and key stage 1 pays off in key stage 2. This is most evident in mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils are tackling some demanding work with success and are able to reason, solve problems and apply existing knowledge to new situations. In a mathematics lesson seen during this inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils were required to check through multi-step calculations about percentages to find out if any errors had been made, and then explain what they had found. The task called upon several skills that they had learned and pupils showed some quick thinking. In turn, the teacher was able to check how well they understood and then refine the lesson in response.

- You have chosen to set pupils by ability for some subjects in some year groups. For the most part, you are pleased with the way that this is working, but you keep a close eye on arrangements to make sure that all groups get the teaching they need. There is plenty of evidence to show that the most-able pupils, in particular, are doing well. In a key stage 2 English lesson, for example, many of the most-able pupils produced some fine pieces of creative writing inspired by the idea of a haunted house. They readily shared ideas with one another and showed a real enthusiasm for words and the power of good-quality description. While boys and disadvantaged pupils could do better with the content and presentation of their writing, a good proportion of the most-able pupils and girls at the school are making strong progress in both English and mathematics.
- The majority of children start school with a level of knowledge and skill below that typical for their age. They make exceptionally strong progress in the early years because the quality of learning experiences on offer, both inside and outdoors, are first class. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, the proportion of children that reach a good level of development is above the national figure, and has been for several years. This is a remarkable achievement and is testimony to the quality of teaching provided in the early years classes. Children who begin school at ages two, three or four years get a great start to their education and school life.
- Standards at the end of key stage 2 have risen over time, and in 2015 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a noteworthy success and indicative of some very strong progress, especially in mathematics. However, the progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils in English, and particularly in writing, has not been as strong. You and other leaders are alert to this and are doing something about it. You have introduced a new phonics (letters and the sounds they make) scheme and have made sure that the teaching of writing follows a clearly planned structure so that pupils build carefully on their existing skills as they move up through the school. In addition, teachers plan interesting activities and use texts that draw upon modern and traditional influences and have particular appeal to boys, for example First World War poetry or Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Consequently, progress is speeding up. Even so, work in current pupils' books indicates that there is still a bit more to be

done to make sure that achievement in writing matches that seen in mathematics.

- Most of the time, most pupils behave very well at school. Bullying is rare. Pupils report that it has happened in the past, but not anymore. They also say that no one would put up with it if it did happen and that adults make sure that all the school rules are followed. Indeed, pupils' behaviour around the school is orderly and courteous. They go out of their way to welcome visitors and display a jolly, conversational manner with other pupils and adults. They are proud of their school and keen to show off their many sporting achievements and involvement in performances. They also talk with enthusiasm about new developments at the school, such as the soon-to-be launched school radio station.
- On the playground, a recently introduced 'scrap store' called the Play Pod has been remarkably successful. In fact, pupils say that it has 'revolutionised' the way that they play and behave outside. At lunchtimes, pupils are able to play with all manner of fascinating equipment sourced from harmless scrap materials, such as old netting, tyres or cardboard rolls. The ingenuity and imagination they employ when using this equipment is fantastic to see. Consequently, pupils are kept productively occupied, and get on well with others, as they play and explore outside.
- For the last few years, attendance at the school has been just below average. However, in response to stricter expectations and incentives, it has crept upwards and for the current year to date it is above average.
- In order to keep in touch with local feeling, you and other leaders actively seek parents' views. In addition to sending out formal questionnaires, you invite parents to share their thoughts on post-it notes at open evenings. These comments, along with pupils' ideas, feed into school improvement plans and help to shape developments in policy and practice. Indeed, your school development planning pulls upon many sources of information. This helps you to form a well-rounded view of the school's work and development needs.
- In their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and in their verbal comments during the inspection, parents expressed mostly positive views. A few were not sure of the reasons behind certain school policies, such as the evacuation procedures or the approach to marking. However, all agreed that standards had risen and that their children enjoyed school. A comment on Parent View stating that 'Perry Hall is a friendly school that serves our local community well' captures the sentiments expressed by the majority. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to improve teaching in order to boost progress in English, especially writing, for boys and disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the multi-academy board of trustees, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and several other senior leaders, including the head of school. I carried out short observations of teaching and learning in all year groups and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body (who is also the chair of the multi-academy board of trustees) and talked with pupils in lessons and on the playground. In addition, I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were 59 recent responses and 25 written comments on Parent View. I took account of these and noted the school's routines for communicating with parents and gathering their views. I looked at a number of documents, including: pupils' progress information, the school's own evaluation of its performance, school improvement plans, minutes of governors' meetings and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I talked with several members of staff about safeguarding matters.