

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



26 April 2016

Ms Louise Jackson
Headteacher
Heacham Infant and Nursery School
School Road
Heacham
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE31 7DQ

Dear Ms Jackson

Short inspection of Heacham Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 the school was judged to be good in May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

A lot of good work has taken place since the previous inspection. As a result, the standards of pupils' work have continued to improve. Standards remain above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and the number of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is now above the national average. These achievements represent pupils' good progress.

Pupils love coming to school. They particularly like the recent topics on paws, claws and whiskers, and space. The lessons in class and the educational trips give pupils many happy and informative experiences that they remember for a long time. The trips not only mean that pupils have a lot to think about and work on when they get back to school but also that they do things and go to places that are new to them. They experience life beyond the local area and this widens their horizons.

Parents, staff, pupils and local authority officers know you for your drive, enthusiasm and energy. For example, you have a reputation for bursting into the classroom and asking pupils 'What are you learning?'. Staff are similarly energised by the effect that their work has on pupils' development and are very proud to be

part of the team. Parents speak very positively about the availability of staff to talk to them about their children's work, especially how to help them support their learning at home.

The 'learning café' and 'drop-in group' are important and well-established parts of each school day for many pupils and their families. These activities, which take place before the school day gets under way, are well organised and focus on improving pupils' love of reading and mathematics. They also help new pupils settle and make friends.

There has been a lot of work since the previous inspection to involve pupils more in the work of the school. They are asked to give their views frequently on a range of topics. They are given special responsibilities, which are highly prized. These include learning leaders, who talk to pupils about what they are learning and how well they are doing; playground angels; answering the telephone in the office; and helping in the dining room.

Over the past year, it has been difficult to recruit the right staff for the early years classes. You stepped in to teach part time in one of the classes and temporary appointments were made. This made sure that the children continued to do well and permanent arrangements are in place for next year. Some inconsistent practice between the classes is being addressed by you and the new early years leader.

The two points for development in the previous inspection report were about pupils' writing and subject leadership, and you have made sure that these areas of the school's work have improved. There is still more work to do to develop pupils' writing skills but standards have improved. Subject leaders are now more involved in checking how well pupils achieve across the curriculum, although their all-round overview of their subjects is not yet sharp enough.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that the school's arrangements to safeguard children are fit for purpose and that records are sufficiently detailed. Concerns are picked up quickly and the right actions are taken to pass the information on to the appropriate services.

Inspection findings

- Staff and governors reflect frequently on the difference that their work makes to pupils' progress. The views of other professionals are actively sought and acted on.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress and training for staff are central to school improvement. As a result, staff are confident to try new ideas. For example, the recent changes to the National Curriculum and assessment arrangements have not been a problem.

- Standards were above average at the previous inspection. Since then, an improving trend has secured high standards. For example, pupils' mathematical skills have improved further as a result of the work that focused on the new curriculum and involved maths diaries and workshops for parents and staff. The attention is now focused on further improvement for pupils' writing, speaking and listening, which have been accurately identified as relatively weaker areas for some pupils, especially boys.
- There is a culture that strives to make sure that no one is left behind. This has led to rising attainment for all groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are included in the rising standards and their attainment is often at least as high as that of other pupils.
- Inconsistent practice for children in the early years includes how often their skills are assessed and the way that the curriculum is organised. This slows the progress of some children.
- The governing body has a very clear view of the school's performance. It shares your long-term approach to school improvement. For example, it gave a clear steer about making sure that the right staff were appointed to the early years classes, even when this meant waiting for the right candidates to come along.
- Subject leaders, and many are new to the role, have presented their findings on pupils' performance to the governing body. A new system for tracking pupils' skills in each subject of the National Curriculum started in September 2015 and subject leaders are well on the way to knowing what pupils can do. They have the information they need but are not yet using it sharply enough to have a full overview of pupils' progress in each subject.
- The school's website provides parents with a range of useful information so that they not only know what is going on but also how they can help their children at home. Pupils present their views on the website, which adds extra interest.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children's progress is accelerated in the Nursery and Reception Years by making sure that the provision, teaching and assessment are of consistently high quality
- pupils' speaking, listening and concentration are well developed, particularly the boys', so that spoken and written language skills are consistently good or better.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body with two governors, staff, pupils and the head of the Norfolk 'Better to best' programme. I observed and spoke to pupils as they arrived at school, in lessons and at break times. I spoke with parents as they arrived in the morning. Forty parents and seven staff responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Eight parents and four staff gave written comments. Documentation was scrutinised regarding pupils' performance, the quality of teaching and assessment, and the school's arrangements to safeguard children.