

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



24 May 2016

Mr Richard Osborne
Headteacher
Coton Green Primary School
Kipling Rise
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B79 8LX

Dear Mr Osborne

Short inspection of Coton Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, staff and governors make sure that pupils, parents and grandparents feel welcome. 'There is a real family feel with all of the children being cheerful, polite and helping each other throughout all years of the school' and 'Coton Green is a good school which takes great pride in the nurturing and progress of its pupils', were just two of the views expressed by parents on the Ofsted online questionnaire. These views were also echoed by parents and grandparents who spoke with me at the start of the school day.

You are a reflective leader who is honest about the school's strengths and areas for development. Since your appointment in 2013, you and other senior leaders have responded well to suitable support from local authority advisers and consultants. You have encouraged local headteachers to work with you to evaluate pupils' learning at Coton Green. This combined support has had a beneficial impact. You and the staff, for instance, have made notable improvements to provision in the Reception classes and the teaching of reading.

Last year, the overall proportion of children that achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception increased markedly and was above the national figure. Nevertheless, the teacher with responsibility for the early years rightly identified that boys did not achieve as well as girls.

In response to this, staff started to make sure that the activities they planned interested both boys and girls. During the inspection, I observed all the children in the Reception classes thoroughly enjoying their work. Your latest information shows that the gaps between boys and girls are closing quickly. Similar improvements are evident in reading. A group of children in Reception were seen using their knowledge of phonics to confidently read and correctly sort 'real' and 'silly' words. In Years 1 and 2, pupils read the information their teacher provided with fluency.

Following the last inspection, senior leaders and governors were asked to raise the quality of teaching to outstanding. You and other senior leaders have concentrated on improving teaching and ensuring that pupils make at least good progress by the end of Year 6. While this is a positive picture overall, you rightly recognise that rates of progress, although improving, remain variable in Years 3 and 4. This is because pupils in these year groups have been affected by some changes in class teachers. The actions that you and other senior leaders are taking to further improve teaching and to help pupils make faster progress are suitable.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective. All the parents who spoke with me and all those who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire stated that their children are safe in school. You, senior leaders and governors make sure that policies are reviewed frequently so that they reflect the most up-to-date legislation and guidance. You make sure that staff, volunteers and governors attend training regularly and are aware of how to keep pupils safe. School records which are detailed and of high quality show that senior leaders and staff work well with outside agencies to ensure that, when necessary, children and their families receive prompt and timely support.

Pupils of all ages have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They spoke assertively about crossing the road with care, being aware of their surroundings while riding a bike and keeping personal information confidential when using the internet. You and the staff have created a culture where pupils learn and play together harmoniously and safely. Pupils say, and your records confirm, that incidents of bullying are rare. They told me that because staff are prepared to listen they can share their concerns and ask for help when needed. As one pupil commented, 'Coton is a listening school.'

Inspection findings

- You provide effective leadership and clear direction for teachers and teaching assistants. In order to help pupils achieve the best outcomes, you make sure that staff receive the training required to improve their practice. Equally, you are not afraid to challenge weaknesses in teaching.
- You enable other senior leaders and teachers with specific responsibilities to lead on improvements in the school. The senior leaders and teachers who met with me spoke passionately about their roles in the school. They have contributed to the improvements in the early years, reading, and they have helped to sustain

pupils' good achievement over time.

- In 2015, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 was just above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, attainment was significantly above the national average. However, your scrutiny of these results showed that disadvantaged pupils in both of these year groups did not attain as well as their classmates. The actions you, the staff and governors have taken in response to this difference are having a positive impact.
- You have refined the way in which you track the progress of all pupils. As a consequence, senior leaders, staff and governors have a crystal clear understanding of how well different groups of pupils achieve across the school. Your meticulous analysis of pupils' progress identifies precisely the actions that need to be taken to help all groups reach even higher standards. Your latest information about pupils' achievement shows that as a result of more appropriate support for disadvantaged pupils, the gaps between them and their peers are closing. Nevertheless, you rightly recognise that in some classes further work is required to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- In all year groups, teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils learn to write well and express their ideas clearly. The activities that teachers plan successfully encourage pupils to spell accurately, use punctuation and grammar correctly and to use vocabulary that makes their writing interesting. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 for instance were seen using a wide range of adjectives to describe Greek mythological creatures. Their writing was interesting and helped to bring the creatures 'to life'.
- Last year, you identified that pupils' achievement in mathematics was not quite as strong as in reading and writing. Senior leaders are taking effective action to resolve this. New resources have been purchased and staff have attended relevant training. As a result, pupils' calculation skills and attitudes towards mathematics have markedly improved. Mathematics teaching is highly effective in Years 5 and 6. Pupils were observed thoroughly enjoying how to make best use of £2,500 while planning a holiday to Egypt. Pupils successfully used their knowledge of addition, subtraction and percentages to find the best deals and to explain why one offer was better than another. You are aware that this effective practice is not sufficiently widespread and that there is scope in developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in other year groups.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and respectful. They are inquisitive learners and ask well-considered questions during class discussions. Pupils work diligently. In addition to seeking help from an adult, pupils help each other when they are not sure about their work. Staff make sure that pupils who need extra help receive suitable support as they learn. They also make sure that activities sufficiently challenge the most-able pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants ask questions which successfully extend pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils have the chance to develop a broad range of skills. For instance, all pupils in Year 3 learn to play the violin, while pupils in Year 5 learn to play the ukulele. In art and design, pupils are taught how to express their creativity, sketch, design and learn about great artists. The work in pupils' sketchbooks is of a high quality.
- The physical education and sports funding is spent well and helps pupils to keep active. Pupils have the chance to take part in a range of after-school clubs

including badminton, table tennis, multi-skills and running. The pupils I spoke with were particularly appreciative of the school's sport coach. One group of pupils explained that they previously lacked confidence in gymnastics and the coach had helped them to improve their balance skills and taught them how to do different rolls and handstands.

- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities around the school. Members of the school council spoke with pride about their fund-raising activities. Similarly, members of the gardening club told me about the improvements they had made to the school garden and the range of vegetables they grow and sell; 'We love to see things grow,' they explained.
- The chair of the governing body and other members ask very pertinent questions about pupils' achievement. This is because they find the information senior leaders provide accessible. They are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. Through regular discussions, they check on the difference senior leaders are making to pupils' learning and teaching. The governing body has played a key role in reviewing and deciding how pupil premium funding is spent. They are fully aware of the actions senior leaders and staff are taking to close the remaining gaps in pupils' attainment.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke with me or completed the Ofsted online questionnaire are positive about all aspects of the school's work. They particularly appreciate the care and support staff show their children. Parents told me that they find the school newsletters informative and they like the school's 'open door' approach because any concerns they have are resolved immediately.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers enable pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make consistently good progress and reach even higher standards
- the gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates continue to close
- all teachers plan activities that give pupils the chance to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the teachers with responsibility for the early years and phonics. I also met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I spoke informally with parents as they brought their children to school. I also took account of the 40 responses on Parent View by the end of the inspection. I spoke with pupils throughout the school day. You joined me on brief visits to all classes. We talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed some pupils' mathematics, writing, sketchbooks and topic work. I reviewed a range of documentation including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the most recent information about pupils' achievement, and documents related to keeping pupils safe.