

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

Miss Ceri Marshall
Headteacher
Tenacres First School
Quibury Close
Winyates East
Redditch
Worcestershire
B98 0PB

Dear Miss Marshall

Short inspection of Tenacres First 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 October 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 and your staff have created a nurturing and supportive culture where every pupil is valued and their individual needs are well catered for. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the good quality of education and care their children receive. Typical parental comments include, 'My children would come to school during the holidays if they could', and 'Tenacres is a fantastic school'. The online survey shows that 100% of parents would recommend the school as they feel their children are happy, safe and taught well.

Pupils enjoy school because teaching is effective. Teachers plan lessons that capture pupils' imaginations and build on their previous skills. For example, Year 4 pupils practised and improved their note-taking skills in a topic lesson on the Romans by gathering information about the life of Julius Caesar from a range of texts around the classroom. They were able to collect and subsequently recall precise information due to the investigative nature of the task. During lunchtime, pupils were still discussing the fact that Julius Caesar was stabbed 23 times. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available through visits, exciting events and different clubs also offer and add to the memorable experiences provided for pupils.

Since the last inspection, you and your leadership team have continued to ensure that pupils achieve well and that good teaching has been maintained in all year groups. As a result, pupils make good progress as they move through the school from Reception Year to Year 4. From starting points that are often below those typically expected on entry to school, pupils go on to reach standards that are at least in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and usually above average at the end of Year 4.

Effective action has been taken to address the issues identified at the last inspection. All leaders are involved in tracking pupils' progress in their respective subject areas, although you acknowledge that the analysis and summarising of this data are ongoing areas for development. You carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and that good progress is evident. Teaching staff observe their colleagues to share good practice. Internal and external training is also strongly promoted to ensure that leaders and teachers have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively.

Teachers use assessment information well to plan suitable tasks for all pupils and develop progression of skills. The coordinators for English and mathematics have devised target sheets which correlate with age-related expectations for pupils, and these act as an effective guide for teachers when assessing what pupils know and understand. Teachers adhere fully to the school's marking policy and provide helpful feedback and guidance to pupils to help them improve their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated school leader for safeguarding, you are meticulous in ensuring that pupils and staff are kept safe. Recruitment checks are rigorously carried out on any adults working in school to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils, and teaching staff have the necessary qualifications. All staff and governors have received safeguarding training, including in protecting children from extremism and radicalisation, so that they know precisely what to do if they have a concern. You ensure that swift referrals are made to the relevant agencies where you feel a child is at significant risk of harm.

School policies meet the statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding. The most recent guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, has been incorporated and shared with all staff. Risk assessments are routinely carried out for school activities and trips to take account of any potential dangers. Appropriate checks are also made of the school site by staff and governors to ensure that the premises are safe for adults and pupils. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development is accurate and honest. From the checks made on teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and examination of your own school assessment information, you and your leaders have devised action plans to address areas that you are not yet satisfied with. For example, you have focused on the development of pupils' mathematical skills this year as you detected that there were fewer pupils reaching the levels expected, especially in Year 4.
- Following the removal of national curriculum levels, you have introduced a new tracking system. Pupils are assessed termly in reading, writing and mathematics. Results are collated by subject, year group and pupil group. As a result, leaders have a clear overview of the proportions of pupils and different groups working at, above or below age-related levels. While a clear picture of attainment has been established, the measurement of pupils' progress over time is still evolving. For example, the progress of the most-able pupils is not yet tracked, so leaders are unclear whether these pupils are making expected or rapid progress. Equally, leaders have not filtered the information they have to determine whether gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and gaps between boys and girls are closing in all year groups compared with previous years. You agree that this is an ongoing area for development.
- Governors are committed to supporting and challenging the leadership team. You provide them with helpful information to keep them fully informed. Governors visit school regularly to collect information for themselves, for example carrying out learning walks to check on the provision for disadvantaged pupils and meeting with subject leaders. This also provides them with first-hand experience of the culture and climate within the school. They have a good overview of how well pupils are achieving as they attend training about how to interpret published data. However, as the presentation of the school's own data is sometimes confusing, some governors are keen to receive it in a simpler and more succinct format. In working on filtering pupils' progress over time, you are confident that this can be achieved.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Effective links exist with the on-site pre-school and visits are made to other providers in order to gain an accurate picture of children's starting points on entry. Assessments provided by the pre-school are taken account of and built on, so that there is a seamless progression in the development of children's early skills. Evidence seen in children's learning journals supports leaders' judgements that children's language and literacy skills are lower than their mathematical skills when they start school. However, while provision is good and children overall make good progress, girls generally outperform boys, especially in writing. Wide gaps also remain between disadvantaged children and their classmates, as seen in the school's own data and in published information for 2014 and 2015. You are aware of this and are keen to address this anomaly.

- Phonics is taught well in early years and key stage 1. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and support staff are used well to support individuals or small groups. Children apply their phonics knowledge well to break down and work out tricky words. This also helps the development of their spelling strategies. Good links are made between reading and writing skills during lessons. Pupils are taught in ability groups and this enables teachers to plan lessons at the right level. Home-school diaries show that all pupils read regularly. You ensure that pupils who do not always read regularly at home are heard reading aloud at school by a staff member. A wide range of interventions are in place to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability in reading, writing and mathematics. These interventions are monitored carefully and, as a result, pupils make similar progress to others in the school.
- Teaching is good across the school. All adults act as positive role models for pupils and establish good and trusting relationships. Occasionally, work presented is too easy and pupils are not moved on when they demonstrate that they know and understand the work set. This limits the progress pupils make, especially the most able. For example, subtraction work seen in Year 4 mathematics books lacked challenge for some pupils. Repeated simplistic calculations were completed before a higher level of challenge was presented. Equally, in some phonics lessons in Reception Year, some children had to wait until the teacher set the next word before they could move on. This reduced the workout for children and limited the progress they made.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and show good levels of resilience and determination in tasks. They are extremely polite and well mannered around school, opening doors for visitors and moving sensibly around corridors. At playtimes, 'helpful heroes' are on hand to support pupils. Pupils say that behaviour is good and this is supported by the records kept by you and your staff. Where incidents occur, swift action is taken to eliminate further occurrences. Pupils told me that they enjoy school because teachers make learning 'fun'. They said that they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe, for example in relation to road, fire and internet safety, as they are taught about these aspects. They say that bullying rarely happens at Tenacres. Records checked showed that this is the case.
- Attendance has improved over time and is broadly average. Actions taken have reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Immediate checks are carried out if pupils fail to arrive at school. Pupils whose attendance falls below 93% are tracked and follow-up letters are sent to parents. However, a small number of parents do not bring their children to school regularly. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils was in the lowest 10% of mainstream schools nationally in 2014 and 2015 and remains below average this year. Poor attendance hampers the progress these pupils make and you are keen to work with parents to improve this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- data collected about pupils' attainment is analysed and summarised from pupils' starting points to determine what progress different cohorts and groups of pupils are making, especially those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability, and are the most able
- teaching challenges the most-able pupils, especially in mathematics, and that pupils are moved on quickly when they demonstrate that they understand and can do the work set
- early years staff provide activities that help to reduce the gaps that exist between boys and girls, and disadvantaged children and their classmates by the end of Reception Year
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of others nationally by working with parents to instil the importance of regular attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your leadership team, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I visited several classrooms with you and spoke to pupils about their learning. We looked at the work in their books. I spoke informally to parents as they collected their children from school and took account of the 30 responses to Parent View. Documents and records relating to pupils' achievement, teaching, leadership, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.