

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 November 2016

Andy Tovell
Headteacher
Lodge Lane Infant School
Lodge Lane
Old Catton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR6 7HL

Dear Mr Tovell

Short inspection of Lodge Lane Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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. The school has improved in a number of areas, for example in the teaching of phonics and teaching and learning in the early years. Leaders, including governors, are highly committed to the school; you are thoughtful and reflective in looking at what the school does well and what it could do better. This approach is also underpinned by a strong determination to strive for further improvement. All staff share a commitment to providing the highest quality education for pupils in their community.

Your curriculum is based on a very strong set of values which are central to the school's aims, and ensure that 'all children make a positive contribution to their community'. This approach was evident during the inspection, where pupils in Year 2 at the beginning of an inquiry were starting to explore issues relating to recycling and protecting our planet.

You provide strong leadership and are ably supported by the deputy headteacher. You know the school well and are accurate in your assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. Together with governors, you have correctly identified areas that the school could improve further and have put in place appropriate plans to do this. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors play a full role in evaluating the school's performance and in planning for further improvements. This means that there is a strong shared understanding of where the school currently is

and where it needs to go next. However, governors are not always provided with sufficient detail regarding the performance of groups of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and the most able disadvantaged pupils, in all year groups. As a result, governors are not always able to identify clearly enough which aspects of support are highly effective and target spending even more precisely.

You fulfil a number of other responsibilities in the school, including leading special educational needs and as lead professional for safeguarding. While you carry out these roles well, you acknowledge that you need to delegate more responsibility to others so that you can focus even more closely on building on the school's strengths in teaching and learning. To achieve this, you have already begun training a member of staff to take on the role of special educational needs leader and a new administrator is learning how to carry out and record all recruitment checks on staff.

The sensible approach taken by you and governors is giving you more time to make major decisions about the school, including planning to join a multi-academy trust. Governors, with your support, have taken time to look closely at a range of different options to ensure that they select a trust that promotes the ethos of the school and its values-driven curriculum.

Pupils enjoy school and speak readily about the many aspects that they value. Even children who have only recently joined the Reception Year were able to tell me about the friendly and fun nature of the school. Pupils spoke about inquiries that they have carried out and their current investigation, where an egg has appeared in their classroom and they are trying to determine if it could have come from the school's chickens. In exploring this question, pupils are learning about science by finding out about animals, but within a context which stimulates their curiosity and interest.

Pupils also spoke about Forest Schools, where they learn many different skills, including how to make rope swings and tepees. At the same time, they learn about how to keep themselves safe outside and when using different equipment. These opportunities enhance the curriculum and ensure that pupils are very happy to come to school each day because 'every day is fun!'

Parents are very supportive of the school. The large majority of those who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire during the inspection were positive about all aspects of the school and would recommend it to others. Parents are particularly appreciative of the care provided for their children by adults at the school and by the family learning sessions. One parent commented, 'It is a nurturing and exciting place to learn and the school staff are all fantastic.' A few parents who responded said that they would like more information about the progress that their child is making in school.

Safeguarding is effective.

All aspects of safeguarding are given high priority in this school. Leaders ensure

that all staff receive regular training so that they know exactly what to do if there are concerns. Most recently, staff received training around the 'Prevent' duty to gain skills in identifying signs of extremism. Staff regularly and appropriately record any concerns about pupils, even when these in themselves may appear relatively minor, so that nothing is missed. Staff pass these concerns onto you and, in turn, you ensure that these are followed up as needed. You have been tenacious in following up concerns with outside agencies. You have taken action to ensure that cases involving pupils who have multi-agency involvement are not closed too soon, particularly when your staff continue to have concerns about a pupil's well-being.

Inspection findings

- The previous inspection report identified the need to raise attainment by improving teaching. Since then, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2 has continued to be similar to that found nationally. However, the proportion who achieve above that standard has increased over the past three years. This is because the quality of teaching across the school is consistently good and the most able pupils are provided with additional challenges to extend their learning. Pupil outcomes in Year 2 for the end of this year are set to rise further.
- Pupils make good progress in writing, some from low starting points. This is evident in the work of pupils in Year 2 last year. Their books show that they developed greater stamina in writing over the year, and that by the end of the year, their vocabulary choices, punctuation and their grammar had also improved.
- Pupils currently make good progress in mathematics. The provision of a good range of resources supports pupils in deepening their mathematical knowledge and understanding. For example, during the inspection, pupils were using bead strings and counting apparatus to investigate the number of tens and units in a number. One pupil, who quickly grasped the concept, extended his learning by partitioning numbers beyond 100, using the resources available to him.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen substantially over the past three years. This is because external advice for effective phonics teaching was sought and acted upon by leaders. The school has reorganised and improved their teaching of phonics so that in each class good support is provided for those who need it and sufficient challenge is provided for the most able pupils.
- Pupils make a good start in learning their sounds in the Reception classes. For example, pupils who have just joined the school are provided with opportunities to practise saying and writing the sound they are currently learning throughout the day to reinforce the focused teaching that has taken place. The most able pupils make good progress in reading. These pupils are confident and enthusiastic readers who are well catered for by the school's well-resourced library.
- Children in the Reception Year make good progress, some from low starting points. The proportion achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has increased and is above average. This is because leaders have improved provision so that it meets children's needs fully. Adults identify

children's areas of interest and skilfully plan tasks and activities which will build on this and develop their learning. During the inspection, children were highly enthused by role-playing a fire emergency, creating fire hoses, passing on emergency messages and using equipment to build structures to reach the 'fire'. During these activities, adults intervene to develop children's speaking and listening skills and other areas of learning. They ask questions, such as 'How do you know this hose will be long enough to reach the fire?' and 'Can you tell me exactly where the fire is?'

- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at playtimes because teachers take time to teach them good routines. For example, teachers reinforce the class rules about hands-up and ensuring that pupils tidy their own equipment away swiftly and sensibly. Pupils respond well to the very clear boundaries established by the teacher. Consequently, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school.
- Teaching assistants support learning well in most classes. However, occasionally, for example, whilst the teacher is speaking with the whole class, their time could be better used to promote learning. Teaching assistants are provided with support and training, and are given opportunities to observe each other to further improve their practice. This is helping them to become even more effective in carrying out interventions and supporting pupils.
- The quality of teaching in some subjects, such as in art, is not as strong as in English and mathematics. Pupils are not encouraged to develop and extend their skills. For example, during the inspection, pupils were mixing colours using paints and pastels, but were not given enough guidance about how to develop this skill further or to apply it within a painting or picture.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in the school from their starting points. You, together with the teacher who is being trained in this role, carefully track the progress of these pupils. You ensure that the targets set for each pupil are challenging, but also achievable, so that the pupil experiences success. Parents and pupils are involved in setting and reviewing these targets. Additional support provided is carefully planned and evaluated against its impact on pupils' outcomes. As a result, you know the interventions that work best for pupils.
- Leaders have reviewed their use of pupil premium funding and targeted this more closely to ensure that barriers to learning are overcome. For example, the school now employs a family support worker, who works with pupils and families in difficulties. This has ensured that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is good and their attainment is improving quickly.
- The school's inquiry-based curriculum provides an engaging and stimulating context for learning. It includes opportunities for drama and role play. During the inspection, following the teacher role-playing, pupils excitedly told the inspector that a bear had visited the classroom. Leaders ensure that all national curriculum requirements are covered through very careful planning of all inquiries. Where necessary, the school supplements the curriculum through special days where pupils learn about different religions.
- Subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic. Some of them have not established sufficient systems for checking the progress that pupils make in their subject. As

a result they have not been able to pinpoint with absolute accuracy what needs improving and are unaware of the necessary action needed to accelerate pupils' progress further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors are provided with more information about the progress of different groups of pupils within each year group, so that they can evaluate the impact of spending decisions more effectively and further accelerate the progress of pupils
- subject leaders further develop their roles in improving teaching and learning so as to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their subjects.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher. I met with a number of subject leaders together. I met with three governors and with a small number of pupils from the Reception class, and Year 1 and Year 2 classes, and heard a sample of pupils read. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work. I evaluated the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.

My particular areas of focus on this inspection were:

- how effectively leaders addressed the previous inspection report's area for improvement, to raise attainment by improving teaching
- how well the needs of groups of pupils are being met such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged
- whether achievement is good across the whole curriculum.