

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



6 February 2017

Miss Lynne Mullen  
Headteacher  
Gilnow Primary School  
Gilnow Gardens  
Bolton  
Greater Manchester  
BL1 4LG

Dear Miss Mullen

### **Short inspection of Gilnow Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2017, 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 November 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection by addressing all of the areas for improvement. There is now an increasing proportion of pupils achieving the highest standard in writing and pupils are provided with time to correct their own work. The use of communication technology has become an integral part of lessons and attendance has also improved due to the higher expectations that you have set for pupils. Attendance rewards, the new uniform for older pupils and the trust pupils have in school staff make pupils proud to be part of Gilnow. Consequently, they are motivated and inquisitive learners who soak up the knowledge they gain in lessons.

You have created a bright and welcoming environment for pupils. All staff have a very good knowledge of pupils within each key stage and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthused by the rewards and praise that they receive for their work and attendance. The school day is orderly and pupils move about the school very well. At playtimes, they have a range of equipment to keep themselves occupied so that when they return to lessons they are ready to learn.

The number of pupils who join and leave school throughout the year is much higher than the national average. As such, standards are not as high as they would otherwise be. Children enter the early years with standards which are lower than those typical of their age. These children make good progress but not all catch up by the end of their time in the early years. Children are dependent upon adults and few engage in conversation with each other. The decision to open the school to

two-year-olds is starting to break down these barriers to learning earlier. From having little English on entry, pupils develop confidence in spoken language to become articulate and expressive by the end of key stage 2.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your staff are highly vigilant and your regular leadership meetings to discuss pupils' needs illustrate your proactive approach towards safeguarding pupils. Due to the high level of pupil mobility, you have put in place very robust systems for tracking the destination of pupils who are taken off the school register, as well as clear systems for parents requesting holidays during school time. Procedures are tight and are known by all staff. Recruitment checks completed on staff are rigorous. Records of incidents are detailed and are kept securely. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when they work online. They are aware of the importance of attending school and they feel safe and secure because of the approachability of staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- A key focus of the inspection was to see how effectively the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are challenged in their reading. When reading, pupils are fluent and have a very good understanding of a whole text. However, because they read unfamiliar words fluently, pupils do not question their meaning, narrowing the range of their vocabulary. This is exemplified in their test papers where some of the more complex questions have been answered correctly, because they require a good understanding of the text. In contrast, some of the vocabulary questions are incorrect due to pupils' limited range of vocabulary.
- When writing, the most able Year 2 pupils can talk about and use subordinating conjunctions but cannot explain how they work or their function in a piece of writing. By Year 6, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils use phrases and punctuation which are fit for purpose, but cannot fully explain why they are using them. Despite this, the quality of pupils' writing indicates good progress throughout the school and a high standard of attainment.
- Children in the early years do not have enough chances to practise developing their language skills by talking with others in their peer group. Adults interact on a one-to-one basis with children and do not provide enough opportunities for them to talk to each other. In the outdoor area there is more evidence of children interacting, but they flock to adults when they become available and the same dynamic becomes evident.
- Pupils who remain in the school throughout the Reception Year achieve a good level of development that is broadly in line with national averages, representing their good progress from their starting points.
- The learning environment in the early years promotes mathematics very well, through displays and equipment. This is not replicated for language and, in this respect, the environment lacks richness.
- The pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils with their reading and language skills. This has been effective for those pupils in need of

extra support, but it has not yet been used to challenge the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils to reach the highest standards in their reading. The pupil premium strategy identifies language barriers but only provides a small proportion of the grant to support pupils' language and reading skills. Governors, from their analysis of the published data, have already identified this and are taking actions to redress this imbalance.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium grant is targeted to support the most able disadvantaged pupils to develop their range of vocabulary across the school
- teachers challenge pupils' understanding of unfamiliar words in their reading to help them to develop a wider range of vocabulary
- teachers extend pupils' awareness of vocabulary choices so that pupils understand why they are effective in their written work
- they improve the environment and adult interactions in the early years provision to provide better opportunities for children to develop their speech and language.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- The lead inspector observed teaching in each class, including the Nursery. These visits were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector looked through a range of pupils' work, particularly in writing and mathematics, and took account of work from across the curriculum.
- The lead inspector heard readers from Year 3 and Year 6, as well as hearing pupils read their own work during lessons in a range of year groups.
- The lead inspector spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school and at playtime.
- The lead inspector made observations of pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, when pupils were moving in and around the school, and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, governors, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the performance information for pupils currently in the school.

- The lead inspector looked at attendance and behaviour records, including records of bullying incidents.
- The lead inspector reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and children.