

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



2 February 2017

Mr David Jones
Executive headteacher
Ashwater Primary School
Ashwater
Beaworthy
Devon
EX21 5EW

Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Ashwater Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You lead the school with determination and have high expectations of yourself, your staff and pupils. Supported by the leadership team and governors, you are sharply focused on ensuring the continuing success of both schools that form the Carey Foundation (Ashwater Primary School and Halwill Primary School). You have an honest and accurate view of Ashwater's strengths and weaknesses and take prompt and effective action to secure improvements quickly. As a result of the partnership with Halwill, staff morale is high. Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from good-quality training. For example, recent mathematics training has focused on how pupils can be helped to strengthen further their understanding of numbers and how this knowledge can help them when calculating.

Parents value the 'family feel' of the school and the way it is 'well integrated into the community'. They appreciate the opportunities you and your staff provide for them to discuss their children's progress each term. Pupils enjoy being at school. Their good behaviour, their high levels of engagement in lessons and the pride in the presentation of their work reflect their enthusiasm for school. You have ensured that the curriculum is well planned and provides many opportunities for pupils to experience a range of creative and sporting activities. Pupils receive particularly good support for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values.

Since the previous inspection you have ensured that pupils' progress and attainment in reading have remained strong. Writing tasks are integrated into the work that pupils complete in other subjects and take account of their abilities and interests. As they learn to plan, edit and improve their written work, pupils develop the confidence and stamina to write at length. However, pupils' spelling lacks the accuracy to achieve the highest standards.

Pupils have a good grasp of numbers and complete calculations accurately. They show less confidence when deciding how to tackle a mathematical problem. In particular, they lack confidence in choosing the most efficient way to solve problems.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your vigilance makes sure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff understand the role that they play in protecting pupils against all possible risks, and are clear about the benefits of sharing any concerns about a pupil with the designated lead at an early stage. As the designated safeguarding lead, you have a comprehensive knowledge of the vulnerable pupils in the school. You and your staff work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families are well supported.

Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fit for purpose and kept up to date. The appropriate checks are made to ensure that staff, and other adults who are involved in the school, are suitable to work with pupils. Safeguarding records are detailed and accurate. Staff receive regular update training so that they are able to identify possible safeguarding issues quickly. Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and complete regular checks to make sure that the school is a safe place to be for pupils, and all other members of the school community. Governors have undertaken training on the prevention of extremism and radicalisation in schools and take account of this in their safeguarding practice.

The pupils I spoke to during the inspection all said that they felt safe at school and well supported personally and academically. As one pupil said, 'I get lots of help and I know I can learn here.' Pupils describe the school as 'a family', and although they may 'fall out' from time to time issues are 'sorted out quickly'. Pupils are confident that if they have a worry or concern they can speak to an adult and that they will help them to resolve it. Pupils understand the importance of e-safety and have a good understanding of how they can reduce personal risk. Pupils are confident they will be safe when they transfer to secondary school because extra visits are organised to help them get used to a much bigger school.

Inspection findings

In agreement with you, I checked how well the curriculum is planned to meet the needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities, particularly how well the pupil premium is used to help disadvantaged pupils achieve well. I considered the quality of the teaching of writing and mathematics to see if it is helping to raise standards.

I was concerned by pupils' poor attendance in the past, so I checked if actions taken to improve it have been successful.

- The curriculum is motivating and engaging. It meets the needs of pupils in each of the two classes well. Overarching themes provide the structure for teachers' planning. Activities, while accessible to all pupils, also provide challenge for older pupils and the most able pupils. You work hard to provide a wide range of enrichment experiences for pupils, some within school time and some after school. Good use is made of specialist teachers, such as those who teach French and sport. The most able pupils are supported to access additional experiences outside school, such as those provided for pupils with artistic talent.
- You make sure that elements of the curriculum focus strongly on pupils' personal development, including their ability to manage personal risk. Pupils are confident when sharing their views and ideas. They work collaboratively and cooperatively together. Respect and tolerance between pupils, as well as between adults and pupils, feature strongly during lessons and playtimes. This supportive ethos helps pupils of all ages and abilities to achieve well both academically and personally.
- You and your leadership team have revised the procedures for checking on the progress pupils are making to ensure that teachers are working towards the expectations of the new national curriculum. Teachers use this assessment information to modify activities and provide additional support or challenge for pupils. This helps pupils to make good progress. Additional funding received by the school to support disadvantaged pupils is used well so that they achieve as well as other pupils. The support provided varies depending on what help pupils need at any given point. This approach helps pupils to overcome any difficulties quickly and move on successfully with their learning.
- Pupils write confidently for different purposes. They make good progress from their starting points in the early years and continue to do so as they move through the year groups. Most pupils reach at least the expected standard for their year group. They develop a clear and legible handwriting style and a good understanding of grammar and the use of punctuation. The accuracy of pupils' spelling in tests is often good. However, pupils do not always maintain this accuracy when spelling in their written work, particularly when writing in other subjects. In September 2016, the leadership team introduced a coherent spelling programme across all years. Teachers are making sure that pupils will have the opportunity to practise their spellings when writing in other subjects. As a result, the expectation has been raised that pupils will spell words correctly in other lessons. Although these actions are recent, some improvement has already been noted.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics from their starting points in the early years through to Year 6. The answers they give in their mathematics work have been analysed carefully. This analysis has identified that although pupils calculate accurately they often find choosing the best approach, and type of calculation needed to solve problems, difficult. Recently a specialist mathematics teacher from the other school in the federation has trained teachers and teaching assistants in how to deepen pupils' understanding of numbers and how they relate to one another. Teachers have improved their planning of learning as a result. However, it is too early to judge the impact on pupils' confidence and

accuracy when solving mathematical problems that will help them to achieve the higher levels of attainment.

- You have taken swift action to address concerns about pupils' attendance. An attendance and punctuality plan has been developed with the education welfare officer and robustly implemented. This included acting swiftly to confirm with parents why a pupil was not at school and checking for patterns in pupils' absence. Good attendance is celebrated and weekly attendance figures are reported to parents via the school's newsletter. The high-profile approach you adopted has been successful and attendance rates have rapidly improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the accuracy of pupils' spelling, in subjects across the curriculum, improves
- pupils have the skills they need to select the best approach and type of calculation required to tackle, and successfully solve, mathematical problems.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning in lessons in both classes and visited the pre-school with you. During these observations, I talked to pupils about their work in books. We looked at pupils' work and information about their current achievement and progress. I spoke to pupils during playtime. I also spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account the 13 responses to Parent View and the additional comments received via letter and text message. The seven questionnaires completed by school staff were also considered. Meetings were held with you and members of the leadership team, including a member of staff from the other school in the federation who is supporting improvements in the teaching of mathematics. We discussed your self-evaluation of the school and the issues you have prioritised for improvement. I met with two governors and looked at a wide range of documentation including information relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements.