

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 February 2017

Ralph Baldock
Headteacher
Hollingbourne Primary School
Eyhorne Street
Hollingbourne
Maidstone
Kent
ME17 1UA

Dear Mr Baldock

Short inspection of Hollingbourne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You set high expectations of pupils and staff and have established a culture of mutual respect. Your vision of a fully rounded education for pupils is realised through a commitment to high standards as well as access to a broad and balanced curriculum which includes outdoor education, school journey, learning a musical instrument and swimming for all. You ensure that the school is at the centre of this village community and both organises and takes part in local events. Parents recognise the significant contribution that you make to the school.

This is a school where every child's progress and personal development really matter. Senior leaders track pupils' achievement well using a range of useful approaches. You make sure that pupils receive the extra help they need to catch up and you check the impact of that help. As a result, pupils currently at the school make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality attention and carefully focused support. Pupils' behaviour is very good; they have a strong understanding of the school's values and take a pride in both their work and being a member of the school community. There was clear evidence of pupils putting these values into practice in lessons, at playtime and around the school. Pupils enjoy school; they work hard in lessons and want to do well.

At the time of your last inspection, the inspector recognised many strengths of the

school, including pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They also identified a need to enable older pupils to learn and practise regularly how to write complex sentences with accurate punctuation and to raise greater awareness of how pupils should deal with any bullying. Leaders have addressed all of these effectively so that:

- new systems and practices are in place for pupils to deal with bullying; pupils say they feel safe at the school and if they need help they use trained pupil mediators, put a request for support in the 'worry box' or ask an adult to help them
- at the end Year 6, progress in English grammar, punctuation and spelling has accelerated.

You have identified the correct priorities for the next stage of improvement and are beginning to take the right steps to make improvements. You know that most-able pupils will only make rapid progress in lessons if they are stretched and challenged. Leaders are starting to provide teachers with effective support to achieve this. You are aware that children in Reception need more opportunities to write if they are to accelerate their progress and you are working with local authority advisers to address this area of improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe at school and parents are satisfied with how the school cares for their children. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and especially when using the internet; they could recall in some detail the best ways to avoid risk. Parents have also been involved in e-safety training. Children behave sensibly around the school and display a high level of self-discipline. They are supervised well during break and lunchtimes when they play cooperatively and happily. For most of the year, they have access to the field and trees where they make camps and explore nature.

Staff receive appropriate training about safeguarding; policy and processes are well embedded and staff understand how to raise concerns. Any necessary actions are taken without delay. Staff receive training about keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The school works effectively with external agencies in the very small number of situations where this is necessary. Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and records are detailed and of a high quality. There is effective support for the parents of the most vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- You have established a long-standing culture of high expectations and you have motivated the staff to deliver good-quality lessons which inspire pupils to learn. You have identified the right priorities for improvement and have the correct actions in place to achieve them. The leadership team checks on all aspects of the school's work. Teachers receive useful advice from leaders about what they need to do to improve; this is always focused on

overcoming barriers to learning and accelerating pupils' progress. Governors are knowledgeable and closely involved with the school. They are effective in their monitoring of school improvement and evaluating the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' outcomes.

- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress across subjects and year groups. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen at the end of key stage 2. Phonics is well taught and the proportion of pupils in Year 1 that meet the expected standard is above the national figure. At key stage 2, there is no gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of all other pupils. In Year 6, pupils are articulate readers and they read a wide variety of genres. Across the school, pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and handwriting is well taught.
- Attendance levels are well above national expectations and leaders are relentless in their drive for children to come to school every day. There are rewards for outstanding attendance levels and staff follow up every absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement at the end of the Reception Year continues to rise so that more pupils achieve a good level of development
- by the end of key stage 1 and 2, more pupils achieve the higher expectation of greater depth in reading, writing and 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I focused in particular on the following aspects during the inspection: the effectiveness of work to keep pupils safe and particularly the school's approach to bullying; the current level of absence and persistent absence, with a specific focus on disadvantaged pupils; the extent to which the most able pupils are stretched and challenged across the school; and how well reading and writing are taught in the Reception class.

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils, the chair and two other members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We visited sections of seven lessons and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work. I took account of six responses to the staff survey and 31 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also analysed the outcomes of your parent survey from December 2016. I observed pupils' behaviour at break, lunchtime and around the school. I analysed a range of school documentation, including the school evaluation form and the school improvement plan, information about pupils' achievement, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own self-evaluation of school effectiveness.