

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 February 2107

Mr Stephen Robinson
Headteacher
Morecambe and Heysham Westgate Primary School
Langridge Way
Westgate
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 4XF

Dear Mr Robinson

Short inspection of Morecambe and Heysham Westgate Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. During this time, the school roll has increased and the premises extended to provide more space, used mainly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a result of the extra space, leaders have been able to make other improvements, such as establishing a new school library. You have also restructured the leadership arrangements so that senior members of staff have responsibility for key stage 1 and key stage 2. These changes have not distracted staff from working hard to ensure that pupils are happy and safe, and can flourish. Pupils, including some whose families have challenging circumstances, are nurtured and well looked after. Pupils reflect the example school staff provide. Pupils are friendly and kind towards each other and very polite to visitors and other adults.

You are closely aware of the school's strengths and the things which still need to be developed further. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and honest. It leads to a sensible improvement plan which governors are now checking more actively than in the past. Sometimes, the actions leaders have planned have not led to as rapid improvement as you had expected. You know that pupils' writing needs to improve even more. The changes to leadership and governance you have put in place mean that the pace of improvement has speeded up.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers plan activities to match the needs of different

groups of pupils and to provide opportunities to allow pupils to take more responsibility for their learning. Leaders have taken steps in response. For example, they have ensured that teachers' planning is informed by regular meetings which look at how well each pupil is doing and arrangements are now in place to allow subject leaders to work with teachers as they plan. Teachers' expectations that pupils will work hard, with or without direct input from adults, are clear. These expectations are established right from the start by getting the youngest pupils to know when they will be working with an adult or by themselves.

The school was also asked to develop pupils' basic skills in their work in different subjects. Leaders also ensure that this starts in the early years where possible gaps, for example in children's speech and language development, are identified so that additional support can be made available, if needed. There is a considerable focus on developing pupils' writing throughout the school. Pupils use one exercise book for different writing tasks, whatever subject these come from. This means that pupils and their teachers can see how pupils' writing is developing overall and more easily pay attention to important aspects, such as punctuation.

The parents I spoke to were highly complimentary about the school. Their views were supported by very many of the written comments parents provided through the Parent View survey. These commonly included descriptions of the school such as 'fantastic' and 'wonderful'. Some parents recognised how well leaders and teachers have responded to their children's particular learning needs. While the overwhelming view was that the school helps its pupils to learn and develop very well, a few parents felt that their children could be achieving more.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough. Records are kept systematically and with sufficient detail. Staff training is regular and staff are further kept up to date through regular briefings and easily accessible information. Leaders continually look for ways to improve aspects of safeguarding. For example, they introduced a display board in the staff room to make it easier for staff to find any details they might need. Clear information is provided for parents and visitors so that they know about their responsibility in protecting pupils.

The school works closely with a charity which provides learning activities to build up pupils' awareness and skills should they be uncomfortable about situations or relationships. This work has given pupils the confidence to talk with adults if they are worried. It has allowed possible concerns to be quickly addressed. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

Leaders are persistent in their work with child protection professionals from outside the school when this is needed to ensure that pupils are properly safeguarded.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and other staff are dedicated to the school's pupils. Even though the

school is bigger than many primary schools, pupils are well known as individuals. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. For example, I saw pupils working hard and behaving well over the whole school day. The school is calm and has a clear atmosphere of learning.

- Leaders provide an increasing number of opportunities for parents to find out about and share in the school's work. A workshop for parents of children in Reception took place during the inspection. This was part of a wider programme of events and activities which has also recently included a session about phonics. The parents of older pupils can work with their children on projects which allow pupils to extend their writing and other skills through a series of interesting challenges. A recent project for Year 6 was on the theme of 'Harry Potter'. While many parents become actively involved in helping their children through such activities, some do not.
- Governance is improving. Governors recently realised that they should be having more impact and be better holding school leaders to account. Governors have changed the way they work in response. For example, they have identified particular governors to focus sharply on the progress of different parts of the school improvement plan. As a next step, governors are considering how they ensure that the governing body includes people with specific skills and experience to match the schools' needs.
- Over time, some pupils have not made the fastest possible progress, particularly in writing. Rates of progress in writing for Year 6 fell from 2013 to 2015. In 2016 this progress speeded up, particularly for the most able and middle-ability pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still lagged behind. Leaders analyse information about pupils' achievement very carefully and use it to make sure that teachers target pupils' needs in their planning. Leaders have used support from a literacy consultant and links with other schools to help them to improve the teaching of writing. The expectations of pupils' writing are high across the school.
- Some pupils face challenging circumstances. These pupils are supported well although their learning is sometimes slower than others.
- I saw pupils learning well during this inspection. The school's records indicate that teaching is effective over time.
- Learning in the early years is well planned so that all children receive regular input from adults as well as opportunities to learn through play. Leaders and other staff provide interesting activities, for example, in the attractive outside classroom. While children make progress in the early years, the proportion reaching a good level of development fell in 2016. This reflected the relatively lower starting points of some children in that year group.
- The school's additional provision for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. There is a staged approach to supporting such children which starts with an expectation that the teaching for every pupil will be as good as possible. Leaders ensure that they have detailed records about pupils' special needs and how these might affect their learning. Leaders use these in their regular checks that the extra teaching and other support provided work well. Leaders communicate regularly with parents of such pupils to make sure

that they are fully involved. Parents recognise the value of this support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing becomes even more firmly embedded so that the rates of progress of pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, further increase
- the recent improvements to governance become fully established so that governors become increasingly sharp in holding leaders to account
- parents are further encouraged to play as full a part as possible in their children's education.

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

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the pastoral manager and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the school's effectiveness. I also met with governors and a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and talked with others around the school and during lessons. I observed teaching and learning in classes across the school and heard some pupils read. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books. I examined documents including the school's information about safeguarding pupils and supporting their special educational needs, the school's self-evaluation document and the improvement plan. I considered 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, together with 39 additional written responses from parents and spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. Seven responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils were received and 14 members of staff replied to their survey.