

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 February 2017

Miss Jenny Langley
Headteacher
Bishopthorpe Infant School
Sim Balk Lane
Bishopthorpe
York
North Yorkshire
YO23 2QQ

Dear Miss Langley

Short inspection of Bishopthorpe Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 June 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 have created a positive learning culture within the staff team by sharing responsibilities, increasing accountability and giving staff ownership of systems and routines. As a result, staff morale is high and together you take collective responsibility for pupils' outcomes. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards which are above the national average and are improving each year.

The school's greatest challenge at present is to sustain its high standards and continue improving while managing a period of staffing instability. Consequently you are keen to further develop the new team leader roles. These leadership positions are critical in effectively supporting the new teachers in school and continuing to improve the quality of teaching.

At the previous inspection, leaders were challenged to improve the provision for early years, both inside and out, so that there were increased opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and skills. In response, governors have invested in development of the outdoor area and in providing a wider range of general resources throughout the provision. Coupled with the focus on training for staff in the early years, this has resulted in a more purposeful learning environment where children are producing a higher standard of work. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Reception has increased as a consequence.

Parents agree that children flourish in the positive environment and culture you have established.

You have been thorough in ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to explore and develop their understanding, applying new knowledge through learning challenges. This was an additional area for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. As a result, the attainment of pupils has risen in both key stages over a three-year period. However, you have rightly identified that a priority for leaders is to improve standards further so that some of the most able pupils benefit from increasing challenge and a greater proportion are able to exceed the expectations. This is particularly the case in mathematics and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governing body have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, clear and up to date. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. The training that staff receive means that they are effective in recognising and responding to signs of concern. Pupils say that they feel well cared for and looked after in school, and parents agree. The curriculum provides opportunities to support children in being safe and consequently pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, for example when they are online, crossing the road or riding a bike.

Inspection findings

- You and your governors lead with commitment, working systematically to improve aspects of the school's work. Self-evaluation is precise and identifies areas for development accurately. For example, there has been a proactive and planned approach to managing the current staffing changes. Leadership capacity has increased as more leaders now have responsibility for key areas. Through effective staff development and clear expectations for teaching aspects of learning, new staff quickly learn the school systems. Pairing each new teacher with an experienced leader is supporting their development, both formally and on a more informal basis as they work closely together throughout each day.
- Leaders ensure that the progress of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is carefully tracked. A new assessment information system is becoming more robust. It is supporting leaders in enabling teachers to focus on what works best in their teaching and to take greater responsibility for pupil outcomes. Teachers recently presented information to governors about their subject area and the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Staff took great pride in sharing their achievements and governors feel well informed about the success of school improvement work as a result.
- Assessment information and evidence gathered during the inspection show that children's starting points are typical when they enter Reception, with some children working beyond the expectations for their age. The early years leader sets challenging targets for what they can achieve by time they leave Reception. This is resulting in provision which is highly focused and purposeful

and makes sure that children make the best use of learning time to improve and develop their skills. For example, teachers show the children how they can use the resources and activities set up by staff. This inspires the children to be creative and to challenge themselves. Staff intervene with appropriate questions and prompts and children are keen to evaluate their work and make improvements.

- Previously, the proportion of girls achieving the expected standard at the end of early years was much greater than that of the boys. Leaders addressed this and now more boys are reaching and exceeding the early learning goals so that their achievement is in line with that of the girls.
- By the end of Reception, children reach levels of development above those expected nationally and are well prepared for key stage 1. However, you agree that an even greater proportion could be exceeding the early learning goals in writing and mathematics.
- Attainment and progress in reading is a school strength. It is particularly high by the end of Reception due to the precision in phonics teaching from children's entry to school. Parents are well informed and therefore more able to support their children's reading at home. Inviting parents to see phonics lessons and sharing the sounds that pupils are learning in their planners helps parents to understand the school's approach. Pupils continue to make strong progress in reading throughout key stage 1. The proportion who achieve a greater depth is well above the national average. You recognise the need to focus on raising attainment for the most able pupils so that they are challenged to achieve equally high standards in both writing and mathematics.
- Although there was a slight dip in the Year 1 phonics outcomes in 2015, you responded quickly and those who did not meet the standard received additional support in the phonics breakfast group. This resulted in them all meeting the standard by the end of Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further development of team leaders secures improving outcomes for pupils
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged to reach the higher standards which they are capable of, particularly in mathematics and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, team leaders, seven members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I evaluated documentation including: the school improvement plan; information about pupils' progress; attendance and behaviour records; and information about safeguarding. I spoke with a range of parents and considered responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We visited every classroom together to observe teaching and learning and we spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work.