

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



15 February 2017

Ms Amanda Bassett  
Headteacher  
Whirley Primary School  
Whirley Road  
Broken Cross  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire  
SK10 3JL

Dear Ms Bassett

### **Short inspection of Whirley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the inspection of the predecessor school. You have brought a fresh perspective and raised expectations. You care greatly about all the pupils in your school and put their welfare at the centre of your work. Classrooms are well organised and decorated with great care. Pupils' artwork is displayed beautifully and there are plenty of interesting prompts on classroom walls to support pupils with their writing.

Pupils behave well in lessons because they are interested in their learning. They are proud of their school and keen to tell visitors about it. The vast majority of parents who shared their views with me are very happy with the school. They feel that their children are safe and that they have no concerns over behaviour or bullying. One parent echoed the views of others when they commented: 'This is a lovely, friendly school where children thrive in a caring environment.'

Most governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection. They know the school well and effectively challenge senior leaders about the standards pupils achieve. They willingly voice their opinions and ask probing questions. They are well supported by the Fallibroome Multi-Academy Trust on matters including financial management, staff recruitment and the provision of specialist teaching.

In key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is significantly above

the national average. Mathematics was an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders and managers have rapidly improved standards in mathematics and they show good capacity to sustain further improvement. In 2016, two thirds of pupils achieved a high standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

Governors and leaders recognise that progress in writing last year was not as strong as in other subjects. There has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of writing in key stage 2 that has resulted in pupils' progress accelerating. However, the teaching of writing in early years and key stage 1 is less well developed. Opportunities are missed for children to develop early writing in both the indoor and outdoor provision. Although the school's results in the end of key stage 1 phonics screening check are above average, the teaching of phonics shows some variability.

The attendance of disadvantaged pupils appeared to be below that of other groups in 2016 but has now improved. Pupils' attendance is good.

The before- and after-school club provides a range of activities and food for pupils. However, activities are not always well matched to pupils' needs and there are mixed views from parents regarding the quality of the food.

The school website meets statutory requirements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You commissioned a review of safeguarding and, as a result, many new systems were put in place to strengthen the culture of safeguarding. The single central record of checks made on the suitability of adults to work with children meets requirements. All staff have regular child protection training and midday supervisors are confident to report any concerns they have about pupils. Child protection records are kept securely.

Appropriate risk assessments are in place for the school site. However, there is not enough support for midday assistants outside at lunchtime to ensure that risk assessments are rigorously adhered to. As a result, a few pupils played ball games in the yard instead of in the fenced areas. The school's anti-bullying policy is not up to date.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils, including those who are of middle ability and the most able, are challenged well in their learning. Year 4 pupils were observed making rapid progress in science; they were excited about their learning. They investigated the properties of different materials to see whether they were conductors. The teacher then gave them an opened plug so that they could safely discover for themselves how it worked. The learning was extremely well planned and innovatively taught. Pupils' behaviour was excellent because they were so engrossed in their work.
- In Year 6 pupils were observed making good progress in writing. Social, moral,

spiritual and cultural education were promoted well through a Spanish film about a high-wire act. The film was a highly effective stimulus for pupils' writing.

Scrutiny of writing books showed that pupils regularly plan and structure their writing, well resulting in high-quality, technically accurate work. Progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils is strong.

- In Reception Year the most able pupils are making good progress in reading and writing. They confidently write their names and read simple books. They enjoy making the most of the bright and engaging activities that provide opportunities for them to develop their skills in different aspects of the curriculum. However, I observed some of the least able pupils, particularly boys, who were not learning as well as their peers because they were not taught phonics well enough and were unable to recognise letters and sounds. Opportunities were missed to develop their mark-making skills so that they could form letters correctly.
- In the 2016 end of key stage 1 tests, the children who had not reached the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of Reception Year did not catch up. The least able pupils are now making good progress in reading in key stage 1. I listened to Year 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, read well. The least able pupils confidently understood letters and sounds. I also observed them working in a small group with a teaching assistant. They made good progress because the teaching assistant spoke the sounds well and they drew the letter out so that they could accurately connect the letter to the sound.
- Attendance is above the national average and high for disadvantaged pupils. Behaviour is typically good and well managed.
- There is a long lunchtime for infant pupils, and although they behave impeccably while eating their lunch in the hall, behaviour is not as good outside. There is not enough support for the midday supervisors to ensure that all pupils are in the designated areas to play ball games.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of writing for less able pupils in early years and key stage 1 improves
- the teaching of phonics in early years is more systematic so that more of the least able pupils achieve a good level of development
- they update the anti-bullying policy to reflect current practice
- they make improvements to provision for pupils attending the before- and after-school club to bring it to the same quality that is evident in the rest of the school.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, members of the governing body and the chief executive of the Fallibroome Multi-Academy Trust. I observed teaching in all key stages. I spoke with a range of pupils in lessons and at social times. I listened to pupils read, scrutinised reading records and looked at workbooks. I analysed the school's record of checks made on the suitability of staff, records of child protection and staff training and discussed other aspects of safeguarding with you. I looked at the school website and we discussed the school self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I spoke with parents in the playground at the beginning of the school day and considered 53 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free text comments made by parents.