

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



27 March 2017

Mrs Justine Wise
Acting Head of School
Greenhaugh First School
Greenhaugh
Hexham
Northumberland
NE48 1LX

Dear Mrs Wise

Short inspection of Greenhaugh First School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Despite significant turbulence in terms of staffing, you and governors have pursued a shared vision for improvement with steely determination. Unavoidable, long-term absences this year, including that of the school's highly respected executive headteacher, initially rocked your very small team of staff. You have, however, pulled together, adopted a can-do attitude and drawn on your collective initiative to overcome obstacles successfully. Pupils' good progress, learning and well-being have remained firmly at the heart of your endeavours.

Since taking up your post in January 2017, you have sustained an unwavering focus on the needs and educational entitlements of all pupils. Together with governors, you have prioritised well, tackling recommendations from the previous inspection, such as pupils' presentation and handwriting, effectively. You also hone in on current areas that require scrutiny and further development effectively. Consequently, all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, make at least good progress in most subjects. You are not, however, complacent, and acknowledge the need to monitor pupils' progress in phonics more robustly. You have also recognised that further improving the quality of some pupils' writing in the wider curriculum subjects is an area worthy of further consideration.

The previous inspection report challenged the school to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics. Due to leaders' actions, the quality of teaching and learning in

mathematics has indeed continued to improve. In 2016, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1, reaching expected standards and greater depths of learning in mathematics was above national figures. Pupils in key stage 2 develop good levels of fluency in manipulating numbers, using reasoning and deduction to analyse and solve increasingly complex mathematical problems. You have accurately identified a proportion of the most able pupils in some year groups who would benefit from further sophisticated challenges across subjects.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum is enriched in a myriad of ways. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of trips, first-hand practical experiences and visiting experts such as geologists and authors. Your success in delivering a broad curriculum is evident. Pupils' good rates of progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are indicative of this. In 2016, for example, all pupils in key stage 1 met the expected standard in science. Artwork in and around the school is of good quality. As a very small school, curriculum responsibilities are shared between few. Although pupils across the school do well in science, you feel that the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress against the national curriculum expectations in this area need tightening. Fittingly, you have resolved to further develop this aspect of the leadership of science. You are working to overcome some technical difficulties with your school website to ensure that information presented about science and the wider curriculum fully reflects the good practices in school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff and governors keep up to date in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the most recent safeguarding guidance and advice. Your diligent approach to securing regular, ongoing training for adults means that risks for pupils are minimised. Staff are vigilant and committed to keeping pupils safe and free from harm. All have appropriate 'it-could-happen-here' attitudes. Staff and governors know the correct procedures to adopt if any concerns arise about pupils' welfare or safety.

Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They enjoy learning at this happy school and say that there is always an adult to talk to if they have any worries. Bullying, pupils feel, is not a problem in their school: 'We all get along well together.' Older pupils and buddies show caring and considerate attitudes towards their younger friends. 'Mutual respect and friendship' are core values which parents agree typify the school's ethos.

Inspection findings

- Staff's and governors' dedication to maintaining good standards is epitomised by your 'can-do' attitude during a period of uncertainty. Governors challenged you to step outside of your comfort zone to lead and manage the school's work. They have valued your ability to do so in a dependable, unruffled manner. You have developed a solid range of leadership skills in a relatively short space of time. Similarly, you have enabled other adults to acquire a deeper understanding of the part they must play in adopting additional responsibilities and supporting leaders and managers in a very small school. A positive, collaborative approach to school

improvement has thereby been instilled. As a result of your collective determination, good standards of teaching and learning have been maintained and the correct priorities, such as sharper tracking of pupils' progress through science and phonics, have been targeted for further development. The capacity for leadership and management of the school has evolved effectively.

- Teaching is good. Additional adults are deployed in a manner that best meets the needs of pupils. Teachers support pupils to pick up new concepts quickly and effectively. Adults use questioning effectively to challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning, and take care to introduce and explain new concepts in a meaningful way. You have correctly identified a proportion of the most able pupils who would benefit from additional challenge across subjects. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points across key stages.
- Pupils enter the school with knowledge and abilities typical of their age. The large majority are ready and keen to learn to read and write. Children in the Reception class practise and apply their phonics skills within tasks tailored to their age and stage of learning successfully. Through high-quality professional development opportunities, staff have honed their practice in developing pupils' authorial skills. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas in writing regularly. Teachers use focused activities and inspiring topics to motivate pupils to write. Pupils therefore enjoy planning, composing and evaluating their own and others' writing. At times, the good quality of work seen in some pupils' English books is, however, less evident in their writing across the wider curriculum.
- Individual educational plans for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are detailed, communicated effectively and reviewed regularly. Pupils' progress against their individual targets is carefully monitored. You have ensured that specialist equipment and additional adult support are made available and utilised effectively to meet pupils' needs. Parents are fully involved in their child's learning and they value the additional support that their children receive. Records demonstrate that current rates of attendance for this group show improvement from last year. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The local authority has supported the school well during this period of unexpected turbulence. Additional provision in the form of a seconded executive headteacher was brokered for the autumn term. This term, your improvement partner has visited more frequently to assist you in managing the shift in roles and responsibilities. Further challenge and support meetings with the local authority are scheduled; the focus is resolutely on pupils' learning and outcomes across subjects. Your effective liaison with other agencies further enhances provision. External partnerships are strong and enabling; pupils are the beneficiaries.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in phonics is monitored more closely

- pupils sustain their good quality of writing in subjects across the curriculum
- the most able pupils are challenged consistently
- science is prioritised and this is fully reflected on the school's website.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I observed teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups. I scrutinised the work in pupils' books, spoke with pupils from each key stage and considered the 14 responses by pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I reviewed school documentation and information, including policies, assessment information, monitoring files and your school improvement plans. I met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. I talked with parents at the school gate and took account of five free text comments to Ofsted. There were too few responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to utilise. Seven staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire were also considered. During this short inspection, I paid particular attention to the teaching, learning and assessment of phonics, the effectiveness of safeguarding practices, the leadership and management of special educational needs, the enrichment and breadth of the curriculum, governance and external support for the school.