

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 March 2017

Miss Lisa Austin
Headteacher
Oakridge Parochial School
Oakridge Lynch
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL6 7NR

Dear Miss Austin

Short inspection of Oakridge Parochial School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the staffing at the school. During this time, you have been resolute in your commitment to improving the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve. You, and your governors, have taken swift and effective action to address the dip in writing results in 2016. You have built a strong leadership and a teaching team who all say that you support and challenge them to strengthen their leadership and improve their practice as teachers. Governors and parents strongly agree that your leadership is instrumental to improvements at the school.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to strengthen the curriculum so that pupils' personal interests and creative skills were a basis for increasing their progress. Evidence from this inspection shows that pupils are highly engaged and motivated in their learning because the curriculum is based on their interests and needs. Teachers skilfully ensure that curriculum coverage is consistently maintained. The needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are met well. The curriculum is linked strongly to the school's unique location. For example, pupils in the key stage 1 and Reception class make good use of the local environment, such as engaging in treasure hunt activities to help them learn about time. Parents report that their children talk eagerly about their learning and that the 'comprehensive and enlightening' curriculum has enthused their children to take their interests outside of school.

The last inspection also asked the school to embed the new management partnership with a neighbouring primary school so that there would be increased opportunities for the pupils at Oakridge. Since that time, the governing bodies of both schools have federated as one governing body. You have continued in your role as headteacher of this school and executive headteacher of the partner school. Governors provide a strong joint strategic direction for both schools. They challenge leaders rigorously about the standards pupils achieve. Governors ensure the effective use of additional funds to increase opportunities for pupils to work together. Examples include sports activities, clubs, including musical clubs, residential trips and educational visits. Parents are firmly of the view that the school is well led and managed, commenting on the 'strong leadership of the headteacher'.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders know the pupils and their families very well. The school's leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Regular up-to-date training means that staff and governors know what is expected of them. They understand and implement the most recent government guidance. Safeguarding is central to the role of the governing body and governors monitor the school's work to keep pupils safe regularly. The school's systems make sure new staff are recruited safely and the induction process emphasises the clear culture of safeguarding which the school promotes.

Pupils overwhelmingly say they feel safe in school. They are very clear that they know who to talk to if they have a worry or concern and that adults will help them. Parents strongly agree that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school. Parents comment positively on the education and support their children receive at this school, explaining that their children 'flourish' and 'thrive' here. Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying, and they say this rarely, if ever, happens. Their parents overwhelmingly agree. The school's curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including in the outside environment and online.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to check how leaders were ensuring effective provision for writing in the school. Since the last inspection, pupils have often achieved high standards in writing at the end of key stage 2. However, in 2016, pupils did not make as much progress as in previous years. Leaders and governors quickly and accurately identified why pupils did not reach the expected standard and swiftly put in place actions to improve the quality of pupils' writing. These include support from middle leaders for teachers and regular monitoring of pupils' progress. As a result of good-quality teaching, standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are improving rapidly in key stage 2. The writing of key stage 2 pupils shows that they are working at expected levels and the most able of them are being challenged to write at a deeper level. In key stage 1, pupils use their understanding of phonics well to help them spell the words they use in

their writing. In the early years, children are skilfully supported by adults to develop their early writing skills. However, at times pupils are unclear how they can improve their learning further.

- My second line of enquiry was to investigate how successful leaders and governors have been in developing the school's curriculum. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are deeply engaged in learning because it is well matched to their interests and needs. Pupils, particularly in key stage 2, have the opportunity to join with their teacher in planning the curriculum. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm is ignited. All pupils, including the most able, produce quality work, such as their creative writing in response to the 'Survival' topic. Pupils of all ages talk with pride about their learning in a range of curriculum subjects, including science and design technology, and are keen to improve their work. In mathematics, you know that opportunities for pupils to reason about their work and deepen their understanding are still developing. This will help more of them to reach the highest levels of learning in mathematics.
- My next line of enquiry was to check how leaders and governors have strengthened links with the school's partner school to increase school improvement. The leaders and staff of both schools work closely together. The sharing of senior and middle leaders across both schools has increased the quality of professional support and development that teachers receive and has enabled them to improve their practice. For example, the English leader for both schools has worked closely with teachers at this school to raise the quality of teaching in writing. Teachers speak highly of the support they receive and strongly feel that they are a part of a united team. The federated governing body is united in driving improvement in both schools. Parents were unanimous in recommending the school and commented appreciatively on the opportunities their children have to work in partnership with pupils from the partner school.
- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of leaders' work to maintain the high attendance of pupils. Records show that pupils' attendance is above that of pupils nationally. Different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend school equally well. The attendance of pupils who have been absent the most has improved and is now at the national level.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils understand how they can improve their learning further, particularly in writing
- teachers develop more fully pupils' reasoning skills so more of them can achieve at the highest level in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah O'Donnell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your senior teacher. We talked about developments in the school since the last inspection. I looked at safeguarding records and tested out your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held discussions with five governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I talked to other teachers and support staff around the school. Together, we visited mathematics and English lessons and carried out a learning walk. We looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke with them about their work. I observed pupils during their breaktime and talked to pupils about their life in school. I looked at the 22 responses to 'Parent View' and considered the 21 comments submitted. I also considered the responses received to the staff and pupil questionnaires.