

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



7 April 2017

Mr Nigel Attwood  
Headteacher  
Bellfield Junior School  
Vineyard Road  
Northfield  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B31 1PT

Dear Mr Attwood

### **Short inspection of Bellfield Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 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 culture of trust and transparency with pupils, staff and parents which has enabled you to communicate your vision clearly. You and your staff know your pupils and your community extremely well. As a result of this many more parents are attending parents' evenings and workshops. This is starting to have an impact on improving outcomes.

The openness of the leadership team has enabled both pupils and staff to flourish. You have created a culture in the school where pupils and staff feel highly valued. As a result, your school's motto of 'building the foundations for your child's future – together' permeates throughout. The school has a warm welcoming feel and all stakeholders are keen for the school to continue to move forward. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, especially regarding communication. For example, they now have access to an 'app' which keeps them updated on what is happening in the school, an outdoor television, and regular newsletters.

You have sought external advice and challenge which has started to have an impact on your strategic thinking. The external adviser spoken to during the inspection

stated, 'This is a flagship school regarding listening to advice and acting on it to make improvements.' Every child spoken to throughout the inspection was positive about the school. Pupils' behaviour and safety continues to be a strength of the school. Pupils are always kind to one another and it was noted during the inspection that the most able pupils play a strong role in supporting the less able.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. You have successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement. You and the deputy headteacher have worked tirelessly with the governing body in giving them the skills and training necessary to ensure that they challenge the school and the leadership team. Teaching is good. Teachers give pupils independent tasks, such as problem-solving and investigations, allowing for deeper thinking about the subject. This has improved since the last inspection where teachers were too quick to provide answers to their own questions.

The leadership team is new since the last inspection. Senior leaders have experience of work at this level previously. However, middle leaders are new to their roles and, therefore, further support and development is needed in order for them to have the skills to improve outcomes for pupils.

Further work on providing opportunities for the most able within the school and further afield to ensure that they reach their full potential is needed.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Leaders and governors have developed a culture and environment in which safeguarding underpins the school's work and pupils are kept safe. All relevant checks on staff, visitors and volunteers are carried out rigorously. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors participate in regular training in all aspects of safeguarding, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. The school has employed a pastoral team in order to support pupils and their families. Referrals are made to external services where there are concerns about a child's safety and well-being. Leaders are persistent when making these referrals to ensure that their concerns are addressed and they will challenge the system to ensure a child's safety when necessary.

All pupils feel safe at school and one child said, 'The staff all care for us and our families.' Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They have a good awareness of different forms of bullying and these are discussed openly during assembly times. Pupils have access to a 'worry box' and state that these are dealt with immediately.

### **Inspection findings**

- The immediate actions taken to improve teachers' effectiveness in the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling have resulted in strong improvements in

pupils' skills. Pupils said they enjoyed reading and writing across the school. Opportunities for writing are abundant in all subjects and one child stated, 'I'm beginning to be able to write more confidently now that I can spell better.'

- The effectiveness of governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are able to challenge decisions due to the amount of training and support they have received from the new headteacher. Governors are passionate and ambitious for the school. They now show strong leadership and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done in order to address these.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of how the pupil premium funding is used and its impact on pupils' development and achievement. Additional funding is used effectively across the school to support the emotional needs of the most vulnerable. For example, a therapist is employed for a day a week. Data is showing that the gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are narrowing and more disadvantaged pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations.
- Senior leaders understand the importance of the middle leaders' role in driving school improvement. They are currently coaching and training these leaders in order for them to be empowered to take on this role. The impact of this is not yet evident in the schools' standards.
- Additional adults are used to support the learning of pupils. However, many could be used more effectively to ascertain pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, in order to pick up misconceptions more quickly to help accelerate progress.
- Your focus on reading is making a real difference to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. You have invested in a new library and have a library committee led by children who have a high profile in school. Leaders have changed the way reading is taught across the school. Already, progress in children's books and data indicates that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and progress is above national expectations.
- Your staff are beginning to give the most able pupils more challenging tasks in order for them to reach greater depth. However, in mathematics some most-able pupils still state that work is too easy and requires more challenge. The school has identified this as an area that needs improvement and this is highlighted in its school development plan.
- Leaders have been successful in maintaining the exemplary behaviour highlighted at the previous inspection. During the inspection, I observed pupils being polite, helpful and behaving sensibly around the school. Pupils can talk confidently about the behaviour policy in school and really enjoy the rewards that they can receive.
- There are many planned opportunities for pupils to learn about British values of democracy and the rule of law. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- School staff work extremely hard with their community to ensure that pupils arrive to school on time and regularly. Leaders have made very clear the links

between attendance and achievement. There are significant improvements in attendance and the number of pupils that arrive late has also decreased.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they strengthen the middle leaders' knowledge and understanding to ensure that teaching challenges the most able pupils so that they reach the higher levels by the end of key stage 2
- the most able pupils receive work that challenges them and enables them to reach greater depth, particularly in mathematics for the most able disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Brunt  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, members of your senior leadership team, your pastoral team, members of the governing body, including the chair, and also a representative from the Birmingham Education Partnership. I spoke to a few groups of pupils, including the most able and high attainers, about their school experience. You, your deputy and I visited all classes and spoke to children and looked at their work and their learning environment. In addition, I analysed the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central record (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, governing body meetings and monitoring records. I took account of 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and spoke to parents before school.