

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 April 2017

Mr Mark Toogood
Executive Headteacher
Crossways Infant School
Knapp Road
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 2HQ

Dear Mr Toogood

Short inspection of Crossways Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in September 2013, shortly after the previous inspection, you have led the school through a period of considerable change. As executive headteacher of both this school and the neighbouring junior school, you have established a vision for the federation, and promoted values that unite both schools. For example, during the recent 'World Book Day', pupils from both schools came together to celebrate a love of reading. You have taken care to appoint new members of the leadership team who have particular skills and experience to improve the quality of teaching. You have appointed new teachers and a number of teaching assistants. You have been well supported through these changes by the combined board of governors for the federation.

You have successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Teachers plan lessons carefully to match most pupils' learning needs. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is good. Disadvantaged pupils are now achieving outcomes in line with those of their peers in many subjects. Teaching staff have helped pupils become more resilient in their learning. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and enjoy learning from them. The feedback that pupils receive from teaching staff is helping them to improve the presentation of their work, which is particularly good in mathematics.

There is good practice in developing children's ability to write in the early years. A structured approach to developing vocabulary and punctuation is consistent throughout the school. Attainment in writing is now good overall. Pupils understand how to construct stories and their written descriptions are lively. In Year 1, pupils can write simple sentences using appropriate nouns and adjectives, such as, 'The dragon has shiny scales.' All pupils in both phases write extensively and above age-related expectations. For some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, progress is rapid. Leaders and governors have precisely directed the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils in overcoming the specific hurdles they faced in writing. Pupils' longer pieces of writing reflect recent learning. The most able pupils are making good progress and their writing is a strength.

Safeguarding is effective.

The procedures for keeping pupils safe are strong. Rigorous checks are in place for staff and volunteers who work at the school. Your regular briefings to all staff are informative and timely. Consequently, staff are well aware of the risks that children can face and know the signs to look out for, including from extremism. You regularly promote the ethos of care and safety throughout the school. Pupils describe their understanding of values such as respect and tolerance for one another, which are evident in all their interactions. They all know which adult they would talk to if they had concerns and were confident that they would help them.

Governors are very knowledgeable and they work extensively with you to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Parents are unanimous in their view that their children are well cared for. Their comments include statements such as, 'We find Crossways to be a happy and safe learning environment where the children are stimulated and make excellent progress. They have strong links with the community, which benefits the children immensely and gives them a sense of belonging within the town.'

Your leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school site is secure and arrangements for visitors are thorough.

Inspection findings

This short inspection focused on:

- the quality of teaching and learning in early years
- the progress that pupils make in mathematics
- the level of challenge for the most able pupils
- the progress that boys make in reading
- the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in Year 1 phonics
- the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- disadvantaged pupils' attendance

- what leaders do to ensure the safety of all pupils.
- Children in the early years achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement has been consistently strong over time. Assessment is robust so that teachers and teaching assistants are able to meet children's needs and interests as soon as they start in Reception. Teaching assistants provide effective support and help to move children forward in their learning. Teachers plan stimulating activities for children so that they enjoy learning. There is a strong emphasis on learning to write and children make rapid progress. Leaders have good links with pre-school and nursery providers. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have early reviews to ensure that provision is in place for them on entry.
- Over recent years, girls have made the progress expected of them in mathematics. However, too few have reached the highest standard. In 2016, the proportions of boys and of disadvantaged pupils working at more than expected levels were below average. The 'mastery in maths' approach ensures that current key stage 1 pupils regularly review mathematical concepts, and school records show that their progress is rapidly improving this year. Pupils know how to multiply and divide, using apparatus such as tokens or blocks to help them calculate fractions. All pupils understand the approach of 'learn it; do it; use it'. By Year 2, pupils can apply their learning to word problems such as, '7 aliens had 5 pets each. How many are there altogether?'. Higher attaining pupils, who already understand how to calculate the answers, are not always able to move on at a pace that would enable them to achieve their full potential.
- In reading, most girls and those who are disadvantaged achieve expected standards and there are higher proportions working at greater depth than nationally. Leaders have adapted the reading curriculum to better meet the needs of boys because there were too few working at expected levels in 2016. All pupils who read to me during the inspection are making good progress. They have effective strategies for decoding unknown words and read them correctly the next time they appear. Higher ability pupils read fluently and with expression. Stimuli, such as 'pirates' and 'superheroes', have been used to good effect to improve the quality of boys' reading. There has been a major focus on parental involvement in developing reading and phonics skills. Reading diaries are monitored on a daily basis and pupils regularly receive reward stickers from school leaders.
- After years of consistent improvements in the standard that pupils attain in phonics, the Year 1 results for the phonics screening check dipped in 2016. This was particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, leaders have taken decisive actions to improve the teaching and learning of phonics, particularly in Year 1. These measures have included open evenings for parents on phonics and additional training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. The focus has been extended to early years, where children's phonic skills and knowledge are reinforced through home learning. Current records show that most pupils are making good progress and are in line to achieve higher standards.

- The school has a smaller than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs are wide ranging and often complex. Leaders have arranged good support for these pupils for both their academic progress and their personal and social development. The special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of the specific barriers pupils face. Tracking of vulnerable pupils is very detailed. Their standards of attainment are improving but are still below expectations, particularly in phonics. The phonics timetable has been reorganised to provide more in-class support for vulnerable pupils, to help them overcome their challenges. This is enabling them to make progress in their studies and in their personal development. Leaders are aware that attainment for vulnerable pupils needs to improve.
- In science, teachers' subject knowledge is good. The curriculum is extended to include natural sciences such as bird watching. The programme of study enables pupils to make connections with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils can apply what they learn to their community projects, such as 'Thornbury in Bloom', in which they take a leading role. As a result, most pupils make good progress in science.
- Over time, pupils' attendance at school has been at consistently high levels. There are a few disadvantaged pupils whose attendance has, in the past, been low. Leaders are quick to follow up any pupil who is absent and make good use of school staff to assure themselves that absentees are safe and to encourage better attendance at school. Current records show that attendance for disadvantaged pupils is now closer to that of all other pupils.
- Staff are appropriately trained in a range of risks that pupils may face. Leaders regularly update all staff on specific aspects of child protection, such as the risks of radicalisation. Using this knowledge, staff teach about the risks that pupils might face and how to tackle them. Leaders hold regular assemblies, and arrange events to enhance pupils' understanding of how to stay safe. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils and their families. This means that they can be sensitive to, and protective of children who may have particular challenges.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teaching staff:

- continue to improve the outcomes for pupils, especially the most able, to enable them to achieve the highest standards
- improve outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable them to make strong progress in phonics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governors, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for South Gloucestershire. This

letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila A Crew
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you and the deputy headteacher joined me to observe learning in classrooms. We looked at a large number of pupils' books covering a range of subjects. I heard pupils of differing abilities read.

Meetings were held with senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated leader for safeguarding, the leader for pupil premium and English, the mathematics leader and five governors. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, safeguarding and child protection records, and the school's assessment information.

I spoke with pupils in classes and at breaktime to talk about their experience of school and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire by eight pupils. I also took into account the views of 49 parents who responded to Parent View, and the views of 23 members of staff who responded to the online questionnaire.