

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sharon James
Headteacher
Bramley Vale Primary School
York Crescent
Doe Lea
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S44 5PF

Dear Mrs James

Short inspection of Bramley Vale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 since the last inspection. You provide highly effective leadership. You and other leaders have established a culture in which there are strong positive relationships. You know the pupils and families well and have provided support well suited to the needs of this community. Pupils are happy to come to this school and behaviour is good. Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. You have worked hard to provide a wide range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities which the pupils enjoy. Parents said they felt informed about their child's education and were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the teachers.

The recent addition of the new early years foundation stage building has enhanced the provision for this key stage. Pupils are arriving at school with below age-related expectations in all areas and the school works hard to ensure that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, attainment is in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in the early years and key stage 1 the progress of the most vulnerable pupils is not rapid enough to ensure that pupils are meeting age-related expectations in the phonics check in Year 1.

After the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that all pupils knew how to improve their work. You were also asked to remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and to provide greater challenges for the most able pupils. As a result of good leadership, the school has improved in these areas.

Since the last inspection, the school has made progress in addressing the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by careful monitoring of performance in teaching and planning and pupils' outcomes. There is a strong culture of improvement. All staff at the school expressed the view that they felt well supported and that leaders do all they can to ensure that staff feel motivated. One staff member commented, 'All staff at Bramley Vale work together as a team to improve the lives of children in our care.'

Performance management is used effectively to raise the quality of teaching in the school. You use performance management effectively to ensure that teachers and other staff have continually high expectations. Monitoring is routine and regular and evident in a wide range of documentation. It involves the use of learning walks, drop ins and the scrutiny of pupils' books. Other senior leaders support you to complete this work and this is beneficial in promoting and sustaining consistently good teaching across the school.

Pupils now know how to improve their work. A marking policy is in place that is consistently applied across the school. Helpful guidance from teachers is evident in lessons and in pupils' books and pupils reported that teachers are supportive. The most able pupils are now provided with an appropriate level of challenge and this is evident in published data which shows that the most able pupils are making good progress. Tasks are planned to meet the different needs of pupils in every class and pupils enjoy the different tasks set by teachers.

Your careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress across the school has ensured that all pupils make good progress. Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium receive good academic and pastoral care. This is a strong feature of this school and enables all pupils to feel valued.

Pupils' overall attendance at school is in line with that of other pupils nationally. However, you recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils rapidly improves.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff and governors are well trained at Bramley Vale School and have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They are vigilant about their responsibilities to keeping children safe and report incidents of concern without hesitation. Systems are embedded throughout the school. Records are detailed and of a high quality, particularly case files, which help you to ensure that all appropriate and necessary action is taken in accordance with statutory guidance and local procedures. Pupils feel safe and parents reported this too. A small minority of parents reported via Parent View that bullying was a problem; however, the inspection process found no evidence to support this. Overwhelmingly, pupils and staff stated that school was a safe and happy place.

Inspection findings

- The attendance of all pupils at the school is in line with the national average overall. Rewards are given in assemblies to celebrate good attendance and pupils know that they need to be in school to do well. For the past three years the attendance for pupils who are disadvantaged and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been below what is expected nationally. Current information confirms that this is still an area of concern and focus for the school.
- You have correctly identified the pupils whose attendance is not good enough and work has begun to ensure that these pupils attend school. You use external agencies to support you in this work and in most cases this is proving to be effective. Leaders are not afraid to act and have taken several families to task for taking holidays in term time. Despite the actions of the school, the attendance of this group of pupils continues to fall behind that of similar pupils nationally.
- The percentage of all pupils who have met the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average for the last three years. Fewer than half of those pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities met the expected standard in Year 1 in 2016. You have correctly identified that this is an area for your urgent focus.
- The close tracking of pupil performance and the adoption of a consistently applied scheme for teaching phonics is helping teachers to closely target additional support and to address underperformance. The new initiative to accept pupils into school at age two years plus means that an earlier focus can be given to the development of speaking and listening skills. However, there has not yet been enough time for this initiative to demonstrate its impact.
- Overall, evidence in school confirms that the teaching of phonics is currently sufficiently effective to ensure that most pupils will catch up to the required standard in Year 2. However, the teaching of phonics is not yet effective enough to ensure that in the early years and in Year 1 the most vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the rapid progress they need to so that they achieve age-related expectations by the end of Year 1.
- During my observations in lessons, looking in pupils' books and talking to pupils at the school I found that teachers give feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils use this feedback well and know what they need to do to improve. Pupils are beginning to learn from mistakes and are willing and eager to learn new information. Different work is set to challenge the most able children and they enjoy these tasks.
- The new online system for parents to contribute to children's learning in the foundation stage has been well received by parents and as a result parents are now actively involved in helping their children to learn well right from the start.
- Pupils' ability to work independently has improved. For example, I observed a group of pupils work independently through a task with little or no support from a teacher in Year 2 while continuing to learn effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- phonics teaching is highly effective and targeted to support vulnerable groups to make rapid and sustained progress so that they achieve age-related expectations in line with other pupils nationally by the end of Year 1
- attendance is at least in line with all other pupils nationally for those pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Walsh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I worked with you to look closely at the school's self-evaluation, its development plan and its own information regarding the progress and attainment of the pupils. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures with the school's business manager and yourself, including those related to the recruitment of staff to the school. We completed a learning walk of the school, visiting every class. You provided a range of pupils' books for me to analyse and a range of documents regarding the monitoring of teaching in the school. I met with governors and I talked to pupils in key stage 2. I heard a small number of pupils read. I also looked at the eight online surveys completed by staff and I viewed the 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I had conversations with parents at the beginning of the school day. I talked to staff about safeguarding.