

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 May 2017

Mrs Gayle Long
Headteacher
Attleborough Junior School
Besthorpe Road
Attleborough
Norfolk
NR17 2NA

Dear Mrs Long

Short inspection of Attleborough Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has restored the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have quickly established your vision for all pupils to be inspired, to achieve and to flourish. While you were the acting headteacher, you and your governors halted the previous decline in standards. In 2016, the end of key stage 2 pupils' outcomes met the government's floor standards, and the improvements in the pupils' rates of progress continue this year.

In September 2016, shortly after becoming the permanent headteacher, you reorganised the senior leadership team. The new leaders are now more accountable for their roles and responsibilities and the impact of their work is clearly evident. You have ensured that leaders' high expectations, combined with the improvement in teachers' skills, are quickly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress in every year group.

Governance has improved in the last 18 months. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, and increasingly hold you to account for the progress that pupils make. You have sought additional expertise from the local authority to enhance governors' skills, as well as hastening improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, you and your governors have very good capacity to sustain improvements.

Pupils told me they enjoy coming to school and that they learn 'exciting things every day'. Your staff continue to expand the school's curriculum and provide appropriate

opportunities for pupils to develop their skills as part of your outside learning provision. Some pupils spoke proudly of becoming 'reader leaders' to support younger pupils to read more confidently, and their achievement to gain a 'pen licence' for neat handwriting. Others spoke enthusiastically about gaining a sense of achievement from the many sporting activities you provide. Equally, staff feel proud to work in your school. One comment echoed the sentiment of many staff, pupils and parents: 'This is a well-managed school with happy children and happy staff.'

The previous inspection report highlighted the need for teachers to provide better feedback to pupils on how to improve their learning. You and your leaders have rectified this by ensuring that a manageable, effective feedback policy is implemented consistently across the school. You have also ensured that pupils have the confidence and skills to learn well, using their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of different subjects. One parent stated, 'Since my child has attended this school, she has come on leaps and bounds.'

Appropriately, you are focusing on improving teaching, learning and assessment to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards. Since September 2016, pupils in all year groups have made accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, a greater proportion of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are reaching age-related expectations. However, there is still some variation in Year 6, due to previous gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders and teaching staff are ensuring that Year 6 pupils are now making the best possible progress from their starting points, and many are catching up quickly.

You acknowledge that a greater proportion of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, still need to reach the higher standards. You have successfully implemented new teaching and learning strategies, including various effective interventions to accelerate the progress these pupils make.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your safeguarding team and governors ensure that appropriate vetting checks take place before an adult takes up their post at the school. Safeguarding records are well organised and detailed. You have robust systems in place for staff to report any concerns they may have regarding pupils' welfare, and work well with external agencies when required. Staff and governors have received relevant safeguarding training and speak knowledgeably about issues relating to keeping pupils safe.

Most parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, agreed that their child is safe and happy in school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that an adult would listen to and support them if they have concerns. They explained appropriate strategies that they would use to stay safe when online. Pupils stated that they 'have seen little bullying here' and 'we are all friends'. Pupils talk positively about the improving behaviour in school, and how the 'traffic light' system works in their classrooms. However, a few parents show some concerns about behaviour within the school. You and your leaders do everything possible to ensure that behaviour is improving for individual pupils, and records show that

there are now fewer negative behavioural incidents. Pupils work respectfully with adults and their classmates and show good attitudes to learning. They play well together at break and lunchtimes, making enthusiastic use of the variety of playground equipment.

Pupil attendance is carefully monitored and is improving across the school. Pupils who have previously attended school less often than they should are improving their attendance due to the conscientious work of leaders and the pastoral team.

Inspection findings

- One of my lines of enquiry was to investigate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. This was because pupils have not made as much progress in these subjects as other pupils nationally. Results in 2016 met the floor standard, which demonstrated a halt in a decline from previous years. I wanted to check that pupils currently on roll are making better progress and improvements are sustained.
- The new deputy headteacher together with the literacy and numeracy leaders have the necessary skills to monitor and improve teaching, learning and assessment effectively. They have correctly identified the areas for improvement and have put appropriate actions in place. Consequently, adults are receiving effective training to ensure that they plan learning that helps pupils make better progress.
- Together we observed teachers using questioning in lessons to good effect, encouraging pupils to think more about their learning and explain answers fully. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils finish their tasks quickly. Pupils rise to the challenge, focusing exceptionally well. They produce writing of a good standard as a result.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well in writing and mathematics to meet the various needs and abilities. Pupils, especially the most able, are eager to take on greater challenges, helping them to make good and better progress. Pupils' mathematics and writing books provide strong evidence that pupils are making at least good progress over time.
- In mathematics, teachers are successfully developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. For example, pupils use the correct technical mathematical vocabulary when explaining how to use a formula in algebra or when discussing how to multiply proper fractions.
- Pupils have opportunities to discuss their ideas with adults and classmates before they start their writing. As a result of rehearsing their ideas, pupils write more complex sentences, using a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation. Pupils respond well to tasks that require them to write high-quality character descriptions, create atmosphere and build up tension in their written work. The most able pupils are able to apply their skills well and produce writing of good quality.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils who still lack phonics skills are provided with appropriate support and intervention. Through this well-targeted support, pupils

make good progress, which is carefully monitored by senior leaders. You have amended the curriculum so that reading lessons are more focused on developing pupils' understanding of class texts. This is proving successful. Pupils told me they enjoy reading and appreciate the diversity of books in class and in the library. Year 6 pupils read with fluency and expression.

- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to extend their mathematical and literacy skills across the curriculum in subjects such as history, geography and science. For example, during the inspection, some pupils in Year 4 were writing high-quality diary extracts about an Arctic expedition, while others in another Year 4 class were using their mathematical skills to calculate the weight of polar animals. Year 6 pupils were using their measuring skills precisely to design bird boxes.
- Another line of enquiry I pursued was how well you and your governors spend the school's pupil premium funding, to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good and better progress from their starting points. This is because in 2016 your Year 6 disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as other pupils nationally.
- Staff identify accurately the barriers to learning that are faced by disadvantaged pupils, and have quickly provided appropriate support to ensure that these pupils make good progress. We saw evidence of pupils' progress when checking their work in books and also in the school assessment information. The changes you have made have yet to impact fully on outcomes for the disadvantaged Year 6 pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. This is because some pupils still have gaps in their previous learning. Leaders and the pastoral support adviser work closely together to ensure that, where required, appropriate interventions, nurture sessions and counselling improve disadvantaged pupils' progress, social skills and behaviour. Consequently, the pupil premium funding is spent wisely.
- My third line of enquiry was to consider the impact of the new leadership in improving pupils' outcomes. You place a high priority on providing all staff with high-quality training to improve their skills, relevant to their roles and responsibilities. Senior and middle leaders are responsible for areas of school improvement, so that everyone is accountable and working to the same aims. You are rightly holding teachers more accountable for the progress pupils make. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that pupils make good progress, while filling in any gaps in pupils' learning. Staff share best practice to improve the skills of others, especially to teachers who are new to their career. These teachers are given effective guidance and support.
- You have implemented a strong assessment system to monitor and track the progress of all groups of pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers undertake regular pupil progress meetings with leaders to identify any pupils who need additional support. Teachers work closely with all groups of pupils, to ensure that they are now making good or better progress from their starting points. This has enabled a greater proportion of pupils to reach age-related expectations, but leaders need to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standards.
- You and your leaders have developed a clear progression of pupils' skills across

the curriculum to build on pupils' knowledge and understanding year on year. I saw the impact of your work in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books.

- Governors check information about pupils' outcomes with greater clarity and ask probing questions if they have any concerns. They have a deeper understanding of the school's work and know where to target their support and challenge.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make at least good progress so that standards by the end of key stage 2 continue to rise, to be at least in line with national figures
- the most able pupils are challenged so that more reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good and better progress similar to that of others nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with you, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- I listened to Year 6 pupils reading and spoke with a group of pupils.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation, plans for future improvement and a letter from the regional school's commissioner.
- I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including mandatory checks and case studies about referrals made to external agencies.
- I visited all classrooms with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who has responsibility for teaching and learning, to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- I took account of the views of 33 staff, 30 pupils and 82 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Parental views from the free-text service were also considered.