

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



10 May 2017

Ms Sue Blair  
Headteacher  
Pennine Way Primary School  
Edgehill Road  
Harraby  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA1 3SN

Dear Ms Blair

### **Short inspection of Pennine Way Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 February 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your inspirational leadership the school has gone from strength to strength. You and your leadership team have created an environment where aspirations, coupled with high expectations, enable pupils to thrive, both academically and in their personal development. Your commitment, and that of your staff, to your children and their families shines through, creating a compelling sense of care and nurture for the whole school community.

Pupils feel that they are an important part of the learning community. They have a clear sense of belonging to their school and the local community. They are involved in the school's improvement and have a part to play in making it a happy place to be and ensuring that learning is fun.

The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school and would recommend it to others without hesitation. Many parents say that their children 'love school'. It is clear from pupils' high attendance that they are eager to come to school every day. Many parents particularly appreciate that you and your staff 'go the extra mile' for children and their families. There is a strong sense of the well-being of the whole family being vital to the success of the school. To this end, your links with parents, whether they relate to their child's learning or their own development, are exceptional.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Pennine Way and say that the school is led extremely effectively. They feel that they are treated fairly and with respect. Staff share your vision and aspirations for the school and there is a strong sense of the team-working to achieve the very best for all pupils.

Children start school with skills and knowledge below, and some well below, those typical for their age. Their skills are particularly low in communication, reading, writing and number. However, by the time they leave early years the vast majority are making good progress. In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check was close to national averages. Disadvantaged pupils that did not meet the expected phonics standard by the end of Year 2 have been offered intensive support and have now successfully caught up with their peers.

Since the previous inspection in 2012, the school had continued to improve academically. By the end of 2015 in both key stages 1 and 2, pupils were achieving above those of a similar age nationally in all subjects and at all levels. However, in 2016 there was a dip in pupils' achievement at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' attainment was below the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics and also at higher levels.

You have been quick to identify the reasons for this dip and have swiftly put actions in place to ensure that pupils are now back on track to achieve all they are capable of. In-year checks on progress across the school and in pupils' books confirm that they are making good progress across each year group and at the end of each key stage.

You are mindful that the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth and higher standards needs to improve further, particularly pupils of middle ability and those who are most able. The actions you have put in place are already leading to further improvement.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to improve lessons so that they were consistently good or better by ensuring that pupils clearly understand their targets and by ensuring that the planning of tasks in Reception and key stage 1 sufficiently challenged the most able to maximise their learning. Leaders have ensured that the following improvements have taken place:

- Pupils across the whole school are familiar with their targets in reading, writing and mathematics. They are prominently displayed in the front of their books. Targets are based on regular, ongoing assessment by teachers and are checked often to ensure that pupils' needs are being met. Pupils of all ages are confident talking about where they are in their learning and their next steps.
- Early years is well organised, with a wide range of interesting tasks and activities that capture pupils' interest. This is often based around the theme of a story book or led by the interests of children. Activities offer a range of challenges for children of all abilities and encourage them to explore and stretch themselves

confidently. For example, two children excitedly played together placing people-shaped counters on beanstalks. Each beanstalk encouraged them to count out more little people, the children enthusiastically challenging each other to count higher and higher.

- Throughout key stage 1 and across the whole school pupils are regularly offered challenge. In writing, feedback is given to pupils appropriate to their abilities. It requires them to extend their understanding and encourages them to take the next step in their learning. As a result, many pupils write confidently, using good-quality vocabulary and expression to produce rich and lively work. The school has worked hard to implement a mathematics curriculum that develops pupils' skills in applying their learning. Pupils enjoy and talk enthusiastically about solving mathematical problems. I agree with you that pupils, particularly those that are of middle ability or most able, could be extended even further, particularly in mathematics, but also in reading, where the new curriculum is still being embedded.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have ensured that pupils have an extremely safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are kept rigorously, are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken regularly and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism and female genital mutilation. Your vigilance, and that of your inclusion team, around the care and support of vulnerable pupils is of the highest standard and is a strength. This, in part, is due to the trust that parents have in you and your staff to prioritise the safety of children above anything. Leaders have exceptionally effective relationships with other agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in school. They feel very confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep children safe and well looked after.

### **Inspection findings**

- From the outset of the inspection it was clear that you are a dynamic leader. Ably assisted and complemented by your effective deputy, you know your school well. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of its strengths and priorities. You have high expectations regarding the further improvements the school needs to make. The governing body is very supportive, challenges you appropriately and makes a positive contribution towards moving the school forward. Consequently, there is very good capacity to improve the school further.
- Teaching is consistent across the school. Staff, including teaching assistants, share your high expectations, have a secure subject knowledge and generate a 'buzz' about learning. They model relationships with pupils that are based on a

strong mutual respect. Staff appreciate, and eagerly take up, the opportunities offered to develop professionally, including taking on responsibilities within the school. As a result, you have a strong, positive and enthusiastic staff team which makes an important contribution to your improvement journey.

- There are a number of strengths within the school. Pupils' opportunities to have their voice heard and influence their local community are excellent. The new school building is the centrepiece of a vibrant community centre. Pupils have played an important part in influencing and designing these facilities and their use. Pupils were gushing with pride when talking to me about their part in deciding on aspects of the building, ranging from the layout of classrooms to the new cycle centre.
- Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. An impressive range of support is offered to pupils and their families through the inclusion-team staff. Their base, known as 'Dingley Dell', is a haven for all pupils. Staff, pupils and parents say the support given to children and families is 'amazing' and rightly recognise that their work is instrumental in developing the well-being of pupils and reducing barriers to learning.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are very proud of their school. Pupils' self-worth is very well developed through the numerous responsibilities they are offered as pupil governors, prefects and mentors. Responsibilities range from activities such as observing and commenting on teaching and learning across school, promoting e-safety, looking after pupils in the playground or partnering with a pupil from another class to help them in their learning. As one parent said: 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds in his confidence and learning since he was chosen to help someone else.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle-ability and the most able pupils are challenged and extended in lessons so that more achieve greater depth and higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and your inclusion mentors. I also met with the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding

records. I met with eight governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I spoke on the telephone to a representative of Cumbria local authority. I also met with your headteacher peer partner and the school educational psychologist. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 79 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of nine parents who talked with me before the school day. I took account of the 41 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke to staff during the day. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I looked at school documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; your school self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; behaviour and incident logs; and documents relating to safeguarding.