

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 June 2017

Mrs Nichola Hill
Headteacher
Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre
Formby Avenue
Atherton
Manchester
M46 0HX

Dear Mrs Hill

Short inspection of Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre

Following my visit on 23 May 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leadership team's strong and passionate leadership provides a clear direction for the school, which you have shared effectively with staff and governors. You have ensured that Meadowbank is an inclusive school that is at the heart of its community and where pupils enjoy their learning because teachers make lessons fun and interesting. Pupils are proud of their school and say that they feel safe. They speak highly of the improvements you have made, including 'ICE time', where they learn in depth about the skills of computing and scientific enquiry. Parents overwhelmingly share their children's positive view of the school. Parents recognise how the good teaching and the high-quality care in school helps their children to succeed. This is typified by a comment received through Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, where a parent stated, 'My children have flourished at this school and continue to grow in confidence. They love going to school and feel encouraged to try their absolute best every day.'

The governors and staff share your high ambitions, and together with them you have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Your actions have improved the quality of teaching of mathematics since the last inspection. The well-considered changes to how mathematics is taught ensure that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and skills, including their confidence in mental calculations. The progress that pupils have made in mathematics has improved rapidly and was well above the national average in the 2016 end of key stage 2 assessments.

You have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas of weakness in the quality of teaching because of your rigorous and accurate monitoring. You recognise that further work is still needed to ensure that the most able pupils in key stage 1, including those who are disadvantaged, receive the support and challenge they need to promote their greater progress. This will enable them to reach the expected standard at greater depth, particularly in writing. You also recognise the need to improve the skills and knowledge of some teaching assistants and refine further how class teachers use them to enhance pupils' learning.

Governors monitor closely the impact of your actions and frequently visit the school to check the accuracy of the high-quality information they receive. A small amount of information on the school's website is not up to date and does not reflect the information relating to the curriculum held in school. Governors recognise that further actions are required to ensure that the website is kept up to date with all the required information.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children, including those members of staff from the children's centre and private nursery who share the school site. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Leaders make excellent use of the professional knowledge of the school's pastoral manager to ensure that they keep detailed, high-quality records. They share information with parents and appropriate authorities, such as social services, effectively to ensure pupils' safety. Leaders follow up any absences rigorously and robustly to support families and minimise pupils' absences so that they do not miss opportunities to learn.

Governors have ensured that appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection.

Inspection findings

- Governors share the high expectations and ambitions of leaders. They effectively monitor closely the work of the school. They often ask probing questions and regularly challenge you to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors have detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, because of the quality of information that you, your staff and consultants commissioned by the school provide. New governors feel well supported and confident to ask questions and contribute to school-improvement discussions because of good-quality training and induction procedures that support them in taking up their role. Governors have secure knowledge of the changes made to the school's curriculum to improve the teaching of mathematics, computing and science, and planned future developments. However, they have not ensured that the school's website reflects these developments and is up to date with the required curriculum information.
- You have a deep understanding of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged

pupils attending your school, which you use effectively to plan how you use the pupil premium funding. Your carefully considered actions enrich disadvantaged pupils' learning experiences. You promote the effective use of a number of strategies, including small group work, to target closely their learning needs to help them catch up. You also address their social needs by supporting family welfare and promoting attendance at school. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in a wide range of subjects, particularly mathematics, is rapidly improving. In the 2016 key stage 2 national assessments, disadvantaged pupils made similar progress to other pupils nationally in writing and reading, while in mathematics they made progress well above the average of other pupils nationally. In key stage 1, the use of the pupil premium is effective in enabling pupils to catch up in their attainment. However, you recognise the need in key stage 1 to refine further how you use the pupil premium funding to support the most able disadvantaged pupils, particularly boys, to attain the highest standards, particularly in writing.

- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Approximately two thirds of the children who enter the school do so with levels of development below those typical for their age, particularly in the aspects relating to language and communication and social skills. Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points in the early years because of the good quality of teaching they receive. This gives them a sound foundation on which to build.
- Teachers, many of whom are new to the profession, have secure subject knowledge, which they use to plan interesting sequences of lessons and activities that systematically develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 1, pupils developed their skills in undertaking scientific enquiry and prediction through a study of melting ice cubes. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding and develop their vocabulary and confidence to explain the reasons for their answers.
- A minority of teachers sometimes do not direct teaching assistants clearly to ensure that they know what is expected of them, consequently limiting their impact in leading learning. When teaching phonics, some teaching assistants occasionally mispronounce the sounds letters make and use incorrect terms for letter names. You are aware of these issues and taking appropriate actions to address them.
- Work in pupils' books shows they make good progress in a wide range of subjects, particularly in mathematics. However, on occasion the level of challenge and expectation of the most able pupils, particularly in writing, is sometimes not high enough to develop their understanding of concepts at a greater depth.
- You closely monitor pupils' attendance. As a result, you are aware that a small minority of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend as often as other pupils. Many pupils do not attend for valid reasons, such as medical needs or illness. However, you recognise that some families do not ensure that their children attend regularly enough. Your actions, led by your experienced and dedicated pastoral manager, include a range of effective strategies to reward attendance. You robustly challenge any unauthorised absences, and work well with officials from the local authority to hold parents to account for their children's regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school website is kept up to date with the required information, particularly that relating to the content of the school's curriculum
- the use of the pupil premium funding in key stage 1 is refined to provide further support and challenge in writing for the most able pupils, particularly boys, so that a greater proportion attain greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team. I met with the pastoral manager and a local authority officer for attendance and with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser who works with the school and an external school improvement professional commissioned by the school. I spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school. I took account of the information contained within the responses to the online questionnaires for parents, Parent View, and staff. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document, action plans and other policies. I looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, recruitment checks and record-keeping.