

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 June 2017

Mr Steven Wetherill
Headteacher
West End Primary School
Chatsworth Road
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA3 1BW

Dear Mr Wetherill

Short inspection of West End Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you provide clear direction for the school and share your ambitious vision effectively with staff and governors. You continually strive to identify and remove barriers to pupils' learning. Staff encourage pupils to be thoughtful and kind citizens who make a valuable contribution to their diverse community within and beyond school. High morale among staff characterises West End Primary. Parents are committed to the ethos and values of the school.

You give close attention to assessment information to identify where support is needed. Following a significant dip in 2016 in the number of boys achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception Year, you have invested in improvements to the outdoor area in early years to provide a wider range of activities, which the boys are clearly enjoying. The impact is evident from the current cohort, in which the number of boys achieving a good level of development has increased. Most pupils join Reception with skills that are lower, and for some much lower, than typical for their age. You and your staff work well with many parents, for example with basic physical regimes such as toilet training for children. For several families, English is not their first language and they arrive with little or no skill in speaking English.

Published data is greatly affected by the number of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the usual times. From whatever their starting points, whenever

they join the school, you and your staff ensure that pupils make good progress overall.

You have taken resolute action to tackle the dip in pupils' attainment in key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2016. The results in reading and mathematics achieved by Year 6 disadvantaged pupils in the 2016 assessment tests were untypically low for the school. However, more than a third of this cohort were pupils who had joined the school during key stage 2. Of those who had attended the school since Reception, the progress was at least good and, for some, better. Changes that you have made are improving the teaching of reading and leading to pupils being better prepared for the rigours of the new assessment system. The progress being made by all groups of pupils currently in school has strengthened. You have reorganised programmes of support to meet the needs of pupils better. Pupils' targets are now more regularly visited to measure progress. Bespoke one-to-one, small group and/or in-class support now more precisely meets the needs of individuals and early indications are that this is having a positive impact.

At the school's last inspection, an area for improvement was to raise the proportion of good and better teaching. You have done this in several ways, including ensuring that teachers provide specific targets for pupils in each subject. These are clearly understood by pupils, as are the ways in which they can improve their work. From our learning walk it was evident that teachers are planning lessons to meet the range of abilities in each class and pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive indeed. Questioning from adults encourages pupils to think more deeply and understand what they are doing. We agreed that middle-ability and most-able pupils now need further challenge so that more achieve greater depth and higher standards.

Attendance was also an area for improvement at the previous inspection. At that time, attendance rates were, on average, 92.3%. The school has been successful in working effectively with families and external agencies so that the current attendance figure is close to 95%. There continues to be an improving picture for attendance, as seen during the inspection, but still too many pupils are persistently absent and this interrupts their learning and progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, governors and staff take safeguarding seriously and regard it as being everyone's responsibility. Thorough checks are undertaken to confirm the suitability of all staff, volunteers and governors. All of them have received appropriate, up-to-date training. There are clear processes for reporting any concerns and the school works effectively with external agencies to keep pupils safe. Pupils told me that they feel safe, and parents share this view. The school site is secure and the governors have taken action to ensure that pupils are safe when they are online. Pupils whom I spoke to informally, and in a meeting, told me that this is a very friendly school. The school's published anti-bullying policy and posters around the school make it quite clear what steps should be taken to identify or address different types of bullying.

Inspection findings

- A focus of the inspection was to assess the opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and literacy skills across all subjects and topics in key stages 1 and 2. There are clear examples of how numeracy skills are developed across the whole curriculum. For example, during the inspection, visitors from a utilities company were working with Years 4 and 5 on their topic about the environment. Pupils used their mathematical skills to work out how much water they use throughout the day and applied this knowledge in analysing water usage in each household. This brought learning to life and several pupils told me how much they enjoy mathematics. Similarly, the school has been conspicuously successful in improving standards in pupils' writing and fostering keenness to write. You have put in place many and varied opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. For example, the topic on an alien landing at school and kidnapping the site supervisor clearly captivated the imagination of pupils, which stimulated their writing. There are many good examples of pupils' writing displayed around the school, as well as in their books. Pupils take pride in their work. In subjects such as science, pupils carefully write out their plans for experiments and then their findings. The local beach has been successfully used with a small number of pupils to inspire learning using your local environment. As a result, this is being rolled out to all pupils in the coming academic year. This demonstrates the initiative of staff to look continually for new ways to engage pupils in learning and applying core skills to the local community.
- Another focus for the inspection was to review the school's strategies for newcomers to the school. The school is exceptionally welcoming to the many pupils who join the school other than at the usual times. Parents and pupils alike are very appreciative of the pastoral support that all staff provide. There is a significant Polish population in school. For many, English is not their first language and they arrive with little or no skill in speaking English. Many join in key stages 1 and 2, not having had the experience of early years provision. From their varied starting points, these pupils make good progress. However, despite a vast range of interventions and support from teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors, results of national tests and assessments show that, for many, gaps in their skills and knowledge remain. To close these gaps leaders have adopted a thorough system to check that all pupils get an appropriate balance of input from a range of staff in order to accelerate their progress. Whatever their starting points, pupils who join the school other than at the usual times make good progress across a range of subjects. This is as a result of teachers working closely with teaching assistants and learning mentors, particularly in improving the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The inspection explored provision in early years, particularly in relation to how well boys engage in play and learning activities. The outdoor area has undergone a transformation with the help of staff, volunteers and local businesses. Whatever the weather, boys and girls alike are stimulated by the range of areas in which to explore and play. As many join the school needing significant support with speaking and listening, the provision in early years now encourages children to talk about their play. In the current Reception group, most girls and boys

make good progress, which demonstrates the impact of the changes made to capture the interest of boys as well as girls.

- There are now regular bespoke sessions during the week to work on improving spellings. Pupils routinely learn how to spell new words. Pupils use dictionaries skilfully to check their own work and learn the meaning of unfamiliar words. You have also introduced children to a new handwriting scheme, which has been introduced to the early years provision when they are learning to write letters. Pupils check new words for accuracy and meaning. This is improving older pupils' handwriting. You understand the importance of monitoring these new initiatives closely to evaluate the impact that they are having on all pupils' writing.
- Although attendance has improved since the previous inspection, the cohort of pupils for whom persistent absence was recorded in 2015/16 was much higher than the national average. We compared persistent absence figures from the previous academic year to this year. The figures have fallen by just over one third. This is due to the efforts of all staff and very effective work with external agencies to support families at home as well as pupils in school. At the start of the school day it was obvious that the vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, where they say that they feel part of the 'school family'. A number of parents commented to me that their children were not happy last week. When I followed this up, they explained it was because it was half term and their children missed coming to school. Others, who have moved their children to this school, say how much their children now 'love school' and that 'for the first time in years [their children] are enjoying coming to school'. Despite this, the reduction of persistent absence remains an area for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate closely the impact of relatively new interventions to improve achievement in grammar, punctuation and spelling across the school
- there is sufficient challenge for all middle-ability and most-able pupils so that more achieve greater depth and higher standards
- they build on the significant improvements already made so that all pupils attend school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed pupils' learning jointly with the headteacher during a learning walk. I looked through a range of pupils' work, particularly in English, mathematics and topic books. I heard readers from Year 2 as well as hearing pupils read their own work during lessons across key stage 2. I spoke with pupils informally around school and at breaktime. I made observations of pupils' behaviour when they were moving in and around the school, and during lessons. A meeting was also held with a group of pupils. Meetings were held with staff, governors, senior and middle leaders. I spoke to a representative of the local authority. I considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the performance information for pupils currently in school. I reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and children. I spoke to several parents and analysed the Ofsted online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and Ofsted parent text messages received from parents.