

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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21 July 2017

Joanne Roach  
Headteacher  
Wattville Primary School  
Wattville Road  
Handsworth  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B21 0DP

Dear Mrs Roach

### **Short inspection of Wattville Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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 October 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are committed to the school's ongoing improvement. You leave no stone unturned in your scrutiny of how well pupils are taught and how effectively they learn. You actively seek solutions, provide opportunities for staff to share good ideas and ensure appropriate training so that staff are increasingly knowledgeable and skilled. Governors seek independent evidence and closely hold leaders to account for meeting identified improvement priorities.

The very large majority of pupils responding to the pupils' questionnaire reported that they enjoy school and that teachers help them to do their best and give them challenging work. Almost all pupils said that they feel safe in school and there is an adult they can talk to if they were worried. In discussions with Year 6 pupils, I was told that they are proud of the school. They enjoy their responsibilities on the school council because they can contribute to ongoing school improvement. Pupils explained that they work hard and that everyone respects each other. As one pupil said, 'Teachers expect good behaviour and we respond.'

You have continued to focus on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection in October 2012. The improvements included ensuring that all children in the early years acquired the necessary language skills for them to succeed in their

learning. Children enter Nursery and Reception with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. A high proportion of children enter Nursery or Reception unable to speak English. Every opportunity is captured in lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes to reinforce children's spoken language. Staff plan and lead a rich variety of activities so that children's practical experience grows and their language is enriched. As a result, the children develop swiftly from one-word responses to simple phrases and then expressive, descriptive sentences. Wherever necessary, you engage the expertise of outside agencies, such as those for speech and language to help analyse children's specific difficulties and inform necessary support. A high proportion of children begin school in the Reception Year and not all children transfer from the Nursery. As a consequence, teachers in Reception have to return to the basic skills taught in Nursery, rather than develop the majority of children's skills further.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors identified that pupils were heavily dependent on adults' direction. You lost no time in helping staff to explore how lessons could inspire pupils more effectively and immerse them in the experience of learning. Together with the deputy headteacher, you arranged training for staff and provided opportunities for them to share ideas, knowledge and expertise. Teachers ensure that lessons are purposeful and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils enjoy the additional challenges and responsibilities that lessons pose for them. They are increasingly skilled in assessing themselves and their peers and providing well-informed feedback to help each other to improve.

You clearly communicate to parents how important attendance is to secure their children's education. You have provided considerable support for families and developed a system of rewards for pupils. You carefully track absences and do not authorise extended leave. You are aware that current attendance figures remain below the national average and you are in the process of discussing with governors how greater challenge to parents can be introduced from September.

Despite the children's strong progress and considerable achievement in the early years, the proportion of children currently achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year remains below the national average. Rates of pupils' progress gather momentum in later years and are improving year on year. However, standards of attainment remain below national figures. The exceptionally high turnaround of pupils in your school makes it difficult for these standards to rise, but you agree that there are still improvements that could be made.

Together with staff, you are rightly considering the specific learning requirements of individual subjects to inform next autumn's lesson plans. You are aware that some subjects are not yet taught in sufficient depth for pupils to further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, staff and governors have a strong commitment to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being and you have clearly communicated your expectation that safeguarding

is the responsibility of all staff at all levels. Staff receive regular training and updated information to ensure that they are able to identify indications of neglect, harm, abuse and exploitation.

The school's safeguarding arrangements provide detailed procedures for recording and reporting concerns. All school leaders and governors ensure that newly appointed staff are recruited safely and receive a full induction of their safeguarding responsibilities on taking up their posts. Staff regularly assess any risk regarding the school premises and all school activities. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and they know the dangers of sharing information with strangers online or in texts. All checks on visitors to the school are suitably attentive.

## **Inspection findings**

- Evidence in school shows that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The deputy headteacher has developed a skilled team of staff, known as the inclusion team, to accurately and appropriately support a range of pupils' learning and personal needs. Teachers fully understand their responsibilities in meeting the pupils' various needs in day-to-day lessons. Staff lose no time in assessing the needs of pupils and ensuring that they receive the right support. You make good use of external expertise when specialist intervention is needed, for example, from the autism team, the educational psychologist, the speech and language unit and the hearing impairment team. Staff regularly assess how well pupils are doing, so that any support can be amended to more precisely meet the pupils' needs. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and receive additional support have a higher than national occurrence of persistent absence. While there are some pupils who have specific health difficulties and require time in hospital, there are others whose attendance is not good enough.
- A high proportion of pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Over the last few years, disadvantaged pupils of all ages have not achieved as well as other pupils nationally in a range of subjects. You have rightly stepped up the identification of pupils' learning difficulties and you diligently track their progress. You regularly conduct meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress and identify where additional support is necessary. Additional staff either provide support or enable class teachers to work with small groups of pupils to bridge gaps in pupils' learning and accelerate their progress. Support includes enjoyable, fun activities where possible, to engage pupils' interest and develop their determination to succeed. Current evidence clearly indicates that the differences in rates of progress between the disadvantaged and other pupils nationally are reducing. Where gaps in pupils' learning are identified, staff are vigilant in stepping up the support.
- You, staff and governors make no excuses for lower-than-average attainment by the end of key stages 1 and 2. You are continuing to look for ways to improve the standards that pupils achieve in English and mathematics. The school has an exceptionally high rate of pupil mobility. In addition, a high proportion of pupils enter the school at different points, with little or no ability to speak English. These two significant factors hamper your persistent efforts to match the

attainment of pupils nationally. There is ample evidence in school that well-designed support for pupils is making a significant and positive difference, often in short periods of time. Pupils make very good progress from their starting points and overcome substantial difficulties.

- Teachers are increasingly confident in teaching the different subject requirements. Open-ended scientific investigations are now more common in a range of classes, and the breadth of subjects are taught regularly through the year. Nevertheless, teaching in science investigations and observations, as well as in subjects such as history and geography, is not yet consistently strong enough to contribute to the progress that pupils make year on year and so ensure that standards at the end of key stages improve.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to seek ways to improve attendance, especially that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- teaching in all the subjects of the curriculum contributes to the progress that pupils make overall, so that pupils attain the standards expected for their age.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, pupils, the chair of the governing body and three governor representatives. You and I observed lessons together and looked at pupils' work. I considered the survey responses from staff, pupils and four parents. I considered the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, documents relating to safeguarding and a range of current data regarding pupils' progress, teachers' assessments and recent test results. I read a range of school policies and considered minutes of governing body meetings.