

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



31 October 2017

Mr David Simpson
Principal
Listerdale Junior Academy
Beech Avenue
Brecks
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S65 3HN

Dear Mr Simpson

Short inspection of Listerdale Junior Academy

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following considerable disruption in staffing across all levels since the last inspection, leaders, staff, pupils and parents have worked together to ensure that pupils are successful and happy at Listerdale Junior Academy. It is a credit to you as the new principal and your highly effective vice principal that this school continues to be good.

Thirty staff responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school, despite last year's disruption in the leadership team and the move to a new academy. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that the pupils at Listerdale Junior Academy receive an interesting, high-quality education and that they are safe and happy.

Leaders and staff from Aston Community Education Trust (ACET) have supported the school well through recent changes. They ensured that last academic year the school was well supported, with the current principal as acting headteacher. They also helped the school, particularly regarding guidance on human resources and financial issues. ACET welcomed the school into its trust from June 2017. This has brought about further stability and school improvement. You now work closely with the other five junior academies in the trust. You know your school well and have taken advantage of the support from the trust to bring about further improvement. This has enabled you and your team of dedicated teaching staff to share good

practice in a wide range of areas, for example moderating assessments and in teaching practice. You and other leaders have quickly understood the main strengths and weaknesses in school. You have planned, along with other strategies, for specialist practitioners within the trust to support improvement across the school to ensure that learning in the early years provision is stronger and that more pupils learn at a greater depth.

Since September 2017, the education welfare officer, representatives of ACET and other staff have been instrumental in improving rates of attendance, for example meeting and greeting parents in the morning and following up assiduously on late arrivals and non-attendees. Rates of attendance for some individual pupils have improved dramatically.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most pupils have attended the school since the foundation stage and are happy and proud to be a member of Listerdale Junior Academy. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times say that they quickly settle into school. Pupils speak well of you as their new principal. They are pleased that you know their names and that you are regularly seen around school and in lessons. They also comment on how approachable you are. Pupils know that their parents and adults in school have high expectations about behaviour, and they are proud to maintain these high standards. Pupils mix well together and British values are fundamental to your school. Occasionally, pupils in Year 6 are too accepting when a minority of pupils call others names. However, you and your team are acutely aware that name-calling in any form is unacceptable, and you are working hard to eradicate this.

Some parents were understandably concerned last year when the school experienced a period of disruption to teaching and leadership. Of the 41 parents who responded via text messages, many recognised that 'the school has been through a tricky period and a great deal of changes' and that it has 'become more efficient since joining ACET'. The vast majority of views from parents via text and Parent View were very positive. Parents are keen to be involved in the life of the school. They are invited to a range of events and workshops, which are all well attended. Parents have played a major part in writing the school's new mission statement, 'At Listerdale we will inspire children to have high aspirations for individual achievement. Our aim is to empower children to become active and inquisitive thinkers through a creative, inclusive and engaging curriculum. We will promote the values of resilience, respect and equality allowing our children to thrive in today's diverse and ever changing society.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils say they feel safe and that adults are always approachable if they have a problem. They are also confident that any concerns they have would be resolved by an adult in school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet. As the designated safeguarding lead, you liaise well with external agencies when the need arises and have a detailed knowledge, accompanied by accurate records, of the pupils in school who may be

vulnerable. You and the trust have ensured that staff are well trained so that they have an up-to-date knowledge of issues that may affect young children today and what to do if they have any concerns. You ensure that your report to governors and to trust representatives is appropriate with regards to any safeguarding procedures or concerns.

Inspection findings

- You and your vice principal form a strong team that leads the school well. You recognise the need to develop middle leadership and hold middle leaders to account for their role in school improvement. To this end, you and the trust have ensured that middle leaders take part in leadership training. You have ensured that assessment systems are accurate and rigorous and show an accurate picture of achievement across the school. Teachers complete comprehensive assessment portfolios, which they moderate with other practitioners in the trust to ensure accuracy. Although relatively new, this assessment system is now supporting the planning of teaching so that pupils' needs are being met more accurately. You and your senior and middle leadership team regularly review the quality of teaching by gathering a range of evidence, such as work in books, speaking to pupils and observing teachers teach. This has given you an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and you are working with other schools in the trust to support all teachers but particularly those who may need more intensive support. The trust's school improvement team works with you, holding you and your team to account for the progress pupils are making, and then offers support as appropriate.
- Governors know the school well. They speak knowingly about what needs to be achieved to make this an outstanding school. They have worked well with the Department for Education and ACET to support the school. They challenge the information you give them and offer their expertise as necessary. You and your team have been keen to develop a curriculum that excites pupils and engenders a love of learning across a range of subjects. You have been well supported by the trust to achieve this goal. Specialist teachers, for example the sports coach, have made a positive difference to learning for many pupils. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the football competitions they take part in and how they reached the finals for hockey in South Yorkshire. Pupils in Year 2 were able to take part in an enactment of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', along with other junior academies in ACET. Foundation stage pupils and Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 took part in 'The Tempest' as part of the Rotherham Shakespeare Festival.
- Outcomes are improving. The large majority of pupils across all year groups and a range of subjects are making good progress. Teachers are now following pupils' attainment more carefully to ensure that most pupils are reaching a standard that is expected for a pupil of their age. This careful analysis has identified that not enough pupils are achieving learning at a greater depth, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence about the quality of teaching has identified where weaknesses occur that may prevent this depth of learning. For example, there are occasions when pupils are not being given clear explanations of where they have gone wrong or are spending too long waiting for adult assistance to move them on in their learning. You are working with the ACET school

improvement team to ensure that these aspects of teaching are strengthened through support and the sharing and modelling of good practice. The numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged are very small in each year group. Therefore, assertions about their progress as a group are difficult to judge accurately. Each of these pupils is carefully tracked, and personalised support is given for their individual needs.

- Children in the early years are happy and quickly settle into this exciting and well-equipped environment. They mix well with their peers and adults, forming good relationships. Parents take a very active part in their child's learning and are encouraged to attend regular morning sessions and afternoon rhyme and reading sessions. Workshops, for example on phonics, help parents to understand how their child is learning. These take place regularly and are well attended. A new staffing team is in place in the early years, and the team is not making the most of this environment to help children learn as well as they could. Equipment as well as interactions with adults are not as valuable as they could be in promoting good learning, particularly in the outdoor environment. The vice principal is working with early years specialists in ACET to quickly develop the early years provision so that learning takes place more rapidly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the early years provision, activities and interactions with adults support good learning at every opportunity, especially in the outdoor environment
- more pupils reach greater depths of learning in mathematics, reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spent most of the day with you and your vice principal. You accompanied me in lessons, where we spoke to pupils about their learning, and considered work in books and the quality of teaching. We had discussions and considered documentation about safeguarding, including the single central record of employability checks, the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. I also met with governors and representatives of the ACET. I observed pupils' behaviour at different times of the school day, including breaktimes. I spoke to pupils informally and more formally, when they told me about the work in their books and what it is

like to attend this school. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's action and evaluation reports. I also took account of 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 41 comments on parent text. Thirty staff responded to the staff questionnaire; these views were considered.