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9 November 2017

Mrs Sarah Manning
Galleywood Infant School
Barnard Road
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Dear Mrs Manning

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Galleywood Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 17 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about a decline in standards at the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you, senior leaders, teachers, parents, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

I scrutinised your self-evaluation and the school's strategic plan, governors' minutes, pupil progress and tracking information, attendance records and pupils' work across the school. I visited all classes to observe lessons with you. I took into account 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective and standards are improving.

Context

There are 175 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is below average. The number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. Pupils who are identified as requiring school support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the proportion with an education, health and care plan, or statement of special education need, is above average.

Outcomes for pupils

In 2016, pupil achievement information indicated that the progress that some pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics was below national averages. Information also showed that too few disadvantaged pupils met the standards expected in the phonics screening check. During the inspection, it became clear that the 2016 outcomes did not accurately reflect the progress of some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 or Year 2. You were able to present detailed information for individuals and groups of pupils.

Many of the pupils who appeared to underachieve had significant barriers to their learning when they entered the school. For example, you carried out early assessments of children's learning and identified that many children had specific learning needs related to communication and language when they started in Reception. You and your leaders were able to provide convincing evidence along with pupil progress information demonstrating that these pupils made good and better progress from their starting points by the end of Year 2. In addition, inspection evidence shows that there has been considerable improvement in pupils' achievement, including that of those supported by additional government funding, including special educational needs funding.

Children in the early years are supported extremely well by all adults because they are acutely aware of children's needs when they start at Galleywood Infant School. Detailed observations and careful planning ensure that children make accelerated progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and number. Children's progress information at the end of Reception for 2017 shows that a high proportion of children in early years achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception was significantly above national averages.

Observations of teaching and learning, pupils' work and pupil progress information demonstrate that teachers provide effective challenge for pupils in their learning. The results for 2017 show that pupils achieving at the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded national expectations, and pupils who were disadvantaged made better progress than other pupils in the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The school's self-evaluation and development plan give an accurate picture of where the school is now and identify what leaders need to do next to further raise pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is of a high standard because leaders' and teachers' accountability is the focus of rigorous performance management procedures.

There has been a strong focus on reading over the last year. In lessons, pupils told me that they enjoy reading and read fluently to me using their phonics knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words. However, although many pupils are achieving at the higher standards in the end of Year 2 assessments, you have acknowledged that many more need to reach the expected standard in reading.

I observed the quality of teaching and learning of reading and writing in Year 1 and Year 2. Teachers plan work effectively to give opportunities for pupils to practise a variety of reading and writing skills. For example, in one lesson pupils were introduced to new words, which encouraged them to consider a range of vocabulary choices to improve their writing. Adults use skilful questioning to support and encourage pupils to think more deeply about the detail of a story or character. These sessions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes in reading and writing.

You have identified that pupils' understanding of what they are reading is not always clear to them, hindering their ability to answer questions about the text they are reading. You have rightly prioritised the quality of teaching of reading comprehension as a focus for the school.

Observations of mathematics lessons and pupils' workbooks show that pupils have a good grasp of number skills and place value. In a Year 2 catch up group, pupils were required to test a statement involving addition of odd and even numbers and then explain their answers. Pupils were enthused as they approached the task confidently and systematically. However, the leader of mathematics recognises that pupils need to be given even more opportunities to explore ideas by using practical resources to help them understand and explain new concepts in mathematics.

You have created a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Procedures for staff to report concerns are clear and leaders follow up incidents swiftly. Your commitment to pupils' well-being permeates the school. The chair of the governing body highly praises the strong focus that you, leaders and teachers have for all pupils in the school, and especially the way you support and nurture pupils and meet their individual and in many cases complex needs.

Your commitment to your school community is reflected in the support that you and your team provide for families and vulnerable pupils. You are extremely aware of the importance of parental engagement. You passionately believe that meaningful

parental involvement in children's education can enhance children's educational experience and is essential to ensure lifelong learning. Therefore, you offer parents a wide range of opportunities to become fully involved in their children's education. You explained that workshops for parents and information evenings are well attended and have had a considerable impact on improving attendance and achievement for some pupils who at times may find school challenging. Parents are complimentary about you and your staff, and it was evident on inspection that relationships between parents and school are extremely positive.

The school's learning mentors are pivotal in ensuring that vulnerable pupils get the support they need to achieve as well as they can. Their close monitoring and focused support ensure that learning time for these pupils is maximised. Pupils who have low starting points and subsequently need to catch up benefit from skilful and targeted teaching, which leads to improved self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from pre-teaching and short, sharp sessions that enable them to engage in class teaching and learning with confidence. As a result, the most vulnerable pupil groups make good and better progress from their starting points.

External support

School leaders work with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils who have additional needs receive the best support available. Leaders embrace opportunities to develop their own skills, particularly skills that enable them to support pupils who have additional needs effectively. You work closely with the nearby junior school to ensure that transition for your pupils is smooth. Your work with the school partnership has been helpful for sharing best practice and confirming the accuracy of assessment of pupils' work.

Priorities for further improvement

- To develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills so that more pupils reach national expectations at the end of Year 2
- To ensure that pupils have more good opportunities to use practical resources and visual images to secure their understanding of abstract concepts in maths.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector