

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



5 December 2017

Mrs Susan Bowditch and Mr David Whatley  
Headteachers  
Heath Primary School, Kesgrave  
Bell Lane  
Kesgrave  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP5 1JG

Dear Mrs Bowditch and Mr Whatley

### **Short inspection of Heath Primary School, Kesgrave**

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Kay Tims, 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 March 2014.

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

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

Heath Primary School has a warm, friendly atmosphere, despite being much larger than average. As joint headteachers, you have worked hard successfully to continue improving the school since the previous inspection. A strong leadership team has been developed with effective support from the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who has also taken on responsibility for phonics following a dip in outcomes last year. The school has effective phase leaders and, more recently, year leaders. Accountability is clear and there are good lines of communication.

Many parents praised the school for good communication and teachers who are approachable and care passionately about their children. They said that their children are enthusiastic about coming to school because of its interesting curriculum. There was particular praise for the SENCo, whose work is appreciated by many parents. Parents were keen to explain how the school goes above and beyond the requirements for supporting their children. One parent said, 'They really go the extra mile' and 'I feel they are on my side when I am trying to get the best for my son.'

These positive views were endorsed by the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and made free-text comments. A small number of Year 1 parents expressed concerns about the number of teachers their children had experienced. These concerns were discussed with the leadership team as part of the inspection. I found that appropriate actions had taken place but that there are further opportunities to extend the way the school monitors perceptions across all year groups. There is currently no formal system in place to survey parents' opinions on a range of issues.

The governing body has appointed several new members recently but they have all hit the ground running. The governing body is ably led. Regular visits are made to the school, key school improvement plans are monitored and there is a culture of wanting the very best for the school.

Considerable effort has been put into the development of an outdoor curriculum for pupils of all ages. Two Year 6 pupils took me on a tour of the grounds and explained how they had opportunities to grow vegetables, look after chickens, do scientific experiments in the nature area and apply learning from lessons in the classroom to outside activities. They said that almost all pupils really enjoy these activities and that it helps them to make good progress.

The school has been effective at developing enterprise skills. Good links have been made with several local companies and pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their business skills. Pupils market and sell the school's eggs. They also produce chutney and sell it at the Christmas Fair. Older pupils take part in business enterprise activities where they set up their own mini-companies.

The quality of self-evaluation in school is accurate. Leaders monitor the performance of the school effectively. This year, leaders have rightly identified that standards in phonics and mathematics need improving. Inspection evidence shows that good progress is being made to ensure that outcomes will be higher this year.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As joint headteachers, you have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. All staff have received and read the latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016), and demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding issues during our discussions. Any concerns raised about the safety of pupils are followed up quickly and thoroughly. All staff have undergone training in the government's 'Prevent' duty to combat radicalisation. Pupils feel respected, valued and secure. In particular, they feel sure that they can talk to staff or midday supervisors and will be listened to. The designated governor for safeguarding visits the school regularly to check on the school's systems.

You and your team monitor pupils' safety carefully. Detailed records are kept in well-ordered files so that you can build up a valuable picture of pupils' well-being over time. Good links are made with external agencies so that care plans can be delivered effectively. Recently, you have further strengthened school provision by

appointing additional staff with a specific responsibility to support the welfare of pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- I followed a number of lines of enquiry in order to check that the school remains good. The first key line of enquiry was an investigation into how leaders had responded to a dip in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics in Year 1. In 2015 and 2016, the school exceeded the national averages in this measure, but in 2017 there was a drop of 16%.
- Following the results of the 2017 phonics screening check, leaders acted decisively to improve standards rapidly. An evaluation of the situation showed that results had dipped because not all teachers had got to grips fully with a new scheme introduced that year and there had been some inconsistencies in teaching due to changes in class teachers. As a result, a central part of the school improvement plan was to improve outcomes in phonics. A senior leader was given responsibility for the delivery of this plan and her actions have been effective in ensuring that outcomes this year are likely to rise to the previously high levels.
- The actions taken have included developing systems for the early identification of pupils needing extra support, and half-termly formal review meetings of the progress being made. Additional professional development has been put on for all staff, which has been led by outside experts. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, providing feedback on strengths and areas for development. Observations by the inspectors showed that the quality of learning in phonics is strong, with lessons that are characterised by a fast pace, good modelling by teachers and an appropriate amount of practice for the pupils.
- The second area that I looked at was the progress made by pupils in mathematics during key stage 2. Progress was broadly average in 2016 but it dropped below average in 2017. Analysis by school leaders showed that this was because not enough most-able pupils, who achieved well at the end of key stage 1, reached the higher standards at the end of key stage 2. Governors and staff have responded to this drop by creating a specific mathematics development plan for 2017. This plan focuses on improving outcomes for most-able pupils. It includes providing staff with training on teaching reasoning, providing regular feedback to staff through the monitoring of lessons and looking at pupils' work in books. Systems to analyse pupils' performance in each year group have been developed so that teachers can plan extra lessons in areas where pupils need more support.
- In addition to this focus on strengthening teaching, additional intervention groups have been developed to support most-able pupils so that they can have extra opportunities to practise the skills needed to reach higher standards. Evidence from the inspection showed that strong leadership in this area is having the desired impact. School data shows that the proportion reaching the higher standards is likely to increase. However, scrutiny of books and time spent in class showed that pupils should be given more opportunities to develop their problem-

solving and reasoning skills within the mathematics curriculum.

- The third area that I checked was the progress of most-able disadvantaged pupils. This has been variable in previous years. The local authority school standards and excellence officer has already discussed this issue with you, and you have responded promptly. You have initiated a range of strategies to ensure that progress is securely good, such as including strengthening teaching in class, providing extra support through one-to-one tuition and by working closely with families on an individual basis to deal with any barriers to learning.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to investigate the progress made on the recommendations for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Significant progress has been made in all areas, but particularly in writing, which has now become a strength of the school. Pupils think widely about the language they use in writing, are developing the ability to construct interesting sentences and are supported in using accurate grammar and punctuation at a level appropriate to their age.
- The curriculum is planned well for writing in a wide variety of genres. Good links have been made to the wider curriculum so that pupils can practise their skills in a purposeful way. Just one example is the way in which Year 6 pupils wrote diary entries for a child evacuated during the Second World War.
- My final line of enquiry was to check how well the school challenges and supports those pupils who are persistently absent. We found that there are good systems in place, which take each individual pupil case by case. Attendance is monitored and analysed regularly. This leads to tailored actions, which include working with outside agencies and meeting with families.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given more opportunities to develop their skills in mathematics related to problem-solving and reasoning
- leaders identify a formal strategy for consulting with all parents on a regular basis.

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

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ramsey  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we met with a range of senior leaders. This included both of you, the deputy headteacher and the SENCo. We also met with the chair of the governing body and several other governors. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.

I took account of 105 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at two letters received from parents. I also considered 41 staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school self-evaluation form and action plans for improvement. We also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

We visited a range of classes jointly with both of you and spoke to pupils across the school, in class and at breaktimes. We looked at books in a variety of classes. I also went on a tour with two pupils who explained to me the ways in which the grounds are used to support the curriculum.