

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Peter Dean
Headteacher
Poringland Primary School
The Footpath
Poringland
Norwich
Norfolk
NR14 7RF

Dear Mr Dean

Short inspection of Poringland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. For the past year, you have been in an acting capacity as headteacher but this term were appointed as substantive headteacher. During this period, you have set the school on a new and upward trajectory. Recognising the school's many strengths, you have also clearly identified where you feel that pupils can do even better. You have galvanised and motivated the whole staff with the new school vision, 'happy, active, inspired, healthy learners'. As a result, Poringland is a school where staff, governors and pupils share an enthusiasm for learning together. As one pupil told me, 'Everyone likes coming to school because you feel part of the school community.' This enthusiasm for school is reflected in the school's good attendance rates.

Governors provide strong support for leaders. They visit regularly, meet with leaders and evaluate the impact that changes have had on pupils' learning. They have confidence in you and your team but are ready to challenge you when needed to ensure that all pupils achieve the very best they can.

Teaching is good because teachers actively look for ways to improve their practice. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff and you have identified opportunities for staff to develop their responsibilities and professional skills, which they welcome. For example, they have enjoyed the opportunity to team-teach together, supporting and learning from each other. You have also improved teaching by better use of performance management, focusing more sharply on the impact of teachers on pupils' progress. This was an area for

improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers have highly positive relationships with pupils. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and so convey this to pupils well. This was evident during the inspection, for example in a computing lesson about spreadsheets and in a science lesson where pupils were planning an investigation. Pupils in turn are keen to listen and contribute in discussions and concentrate well on their tasks.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They said that behaviour at the school is almost always good and that bullying is exceptionally rare. They have confidence that their teachers would act swiftly if they had any concerns. Pupils are confident and articulate, and rightly proud of their school. One pupil told me, 'This school just keeps improving.' Pupils learn about the wider world and know about different faiths and cultures because they are taught about these regularly. They show respect towards each other and celebrate differences. A pupil told me that at Poringland 'everyone is welcome'. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities such as part of the eco group and the well-being group. 'Everyone has a role to play,' said one pupil. As a result, pupils are very well supported in developing into thoughtful, responsible and caring individuals who are keen to play their part in the wider world.

Parents are also highly supportive of the school and almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent. Pupils agree that the school is a safe place where teaching is good. Typical comments included, 'What an amazing school', 'The school has moved from strength to strength' and 'The teachers are so positive and committed and the whole ethos of the school follows from this.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that safeguarding has high priority in the school. Together with your leadership team, you have reviewed and improved the school's systems for recording checks on staff to ensure that all necessary information is shown. You have identified where there are past gaps in information and are addressing these in a methodical manner. You make sure that all staff receive regular and appropriate training, such as around the signs of extremism and domestic violence, and as a result staff know what to look for that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. This is shown in the carefully completed concerns forms. You make sure that all concerns about pupils are followed up and work with external agencies to make sure action is taken when needed. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online because this is taught regularly within the curriculum. You have plans in place to hold information evenings for parents to ensure that they know the potential risks to pupils when online and how they can help keep their children safe.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry that we agreed I would look at during the inspection was whether pupils in Years 1 and 2 make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was because last year the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics assessment was lower than that found nationally. However, at the end of Year 2, outcomes in reading were consistently higher

than nationally and higher than outcomes in writing and mathematics.

- I discussed the Year 1 phonics outcomes with you and other leaders and teachers. You showed me that you have looked in detail at the reasons for outcomes being lower despite good teaching of phonics. You identified that some pupils did not achieve as well as they could have because they did not always understand the tasks as presented to them. You are confident that teachers are now much more aware of the need to talk with pupils about which are real words and which are made up, and provide regular opportunities to use their good knowledge of sounds in reading both types of words.
- I saw evidence of good phonics teaching which is well matched to pupils' needs. I read with some Year 1 pupils who read confidently and with enthusiasm, and who showed good understanding of individual sounds and blends. I looked at your assessment records, which show that pupils are making good progress in their knowledge of sounds.
- I looked at pupils' work in writing, which showed that they are producing work of a good standard. They are provided with lots of opportunities to write in different subjects, for example writing instructions about how to keep clean and compiling reports following science experiments. This provides variety and enables pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in different contexts.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are developing good understanding of number and calculations. However, in key stage 1 as in most of key stage 2, pupils are not being given sufficient opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. The exception to this is in Year 6. In this class, pupils are provided with much more frequent opportunities to grapple with problems and to explain their thinking, which they do well. Leaders recognise this approach needs to be developed across the school so that pupils deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The next line of enquiry that I looked at during the inspection was the progress of less-able pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This was because the number of pupils in published data is very small.
- I found that you and other leaders track the progress of all pupils from their starting points very carefully. You showed me that the vast majority of current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. Where you have identified any variations in progress for any group or individual, you act swiftly to diagnose the reasons and put support in place.
- Leaders know pupils well, and particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They plan carefully for pupils' individual needs, both academic, and social and emotional. They evaluate the impact this support has on the progress pupils are making and their overall development by talking with staff very regularly informally and as part of formal reviews.
- Good training and support are provided for staff so that they are confident in meeting pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- You have identified that in the past too few opportunities have been provided for leaders to check on the provision for pupils in each class so that this can be even more tailored to individual needs. This has already been addressed and scheduled for later

this year.

- The next area I looked at was the progress of disadvantaged pupils, and particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils. This was because published data suggested that few disadvantaged pupils reach above the expected standard.
- I found that you and your team have set up very robust systems to ensure that all teachers know which pupils in their class are disadvantaged and what their individual barriers to learning are. As a result, most support is well matched to pupils' needs and these pupils make good progress.
- Governors are knowledgeable about how funding for disadvantaged pupils is used and what is working well. For example, they cited the support for pupils' emotional and mental health as having a particularly strong impact on helping pupils succeed.
- Nevertheless, you accept that not enough attention has been given to how support can be provided to further accelerate the progress of some disadvantaged pupils so that the proportion who exceed the expected standard is more in line with that of their peers.
- The final area that I looked at during the inspection was how well pupils make progress across the broad curriculum and the effectiveness of middle leaders in ensuring good progress.
- I found that the school provides a rich and vibrant curriculum for pupils and since becoming headteacher, you have encouraged staff to plan lessons which stimulate creativity and imagination. I saw, for example, pupils role playing a rocket launch, imagining their feelings as astronauts taking off and using this as a stimulus for their writing.
- Pupils spoke with pleasure about their interesting lessons and the wide range of other activities provided for them, such as sports clubs, coding club and choir. One pupil told me, 'There is something for everyone at Poringland Primary.'
- Pupils' books show that they produce work of a good standard in a range of subjects. In science, for example, pupils are given good opportunities to carry out investigations, to make predictions and to draw conclusions about scientific concepts. Pupils develop their understanding of history, learning for example about the Egyptians. In art, pupils learn about the work of different artists such as Picasso and Miro and produce good-quality art in the style of the artists. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Since becoming headteacher, you have reorganised subject leadership because you recognised that you had the opportunity to develop middle leadership further. You have allocated subject responsibilities and new leaders have taken up their roles eagerly, writing sensible action plans to develop their subjects further. However, it is early days and the role of middle leaders in improving teaching and learning is not fully developed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans are implemented to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills so that pupils deepen their understanding of mathematics

- support for disadvantaged pupils is sharpened so that more pupils make accelerated progress and achieve above the expected standard by the end of Year 6
- the role of middle leaders continues to be developed so that they have a greater impact in improving teaching and learning in their subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, with some middle leaders and with three governors. I met with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work. I took account of 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I checked the school's website and found it to meet requirements on the publication of specified information.