

29 January 2018

Mrs Tracey Dunn
Fitzmaurice Primary School
Frome Road
Bradford-on-Avon
Wiltshire
BA15 1LE

Dear Mrs Dunn

Short inspection of Fitzmaurice Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that the school serves the local community well. You and your staff are wholly inclusive in your attitude to education. As a result, you have a welcoming and nurturing school as well as one that recognises the place of strong literacy and numeracy as essentials for pupils. One parent's comment is indicative of the majority, 'Fitzmaurice is a great school, well led by Mrs Dunn, well managed by the senior leaders with fantastic teachers that make learning fun.'

You resolve issues well. Your determination means that pupils experience a good education, regardless of circumstance and ability. It is this leadership strength that has provided the tenacity necessary to overcome the poor outcomes of the past.

We discussed the concerns raised in the last inspection about the progress children make in Reception and Year 1 in early reading and writing. Children in Reception class have been doing well for the past three years. There was a dip last year, but this was predicted because of the ability level of the class. Current Reception children are making good progress. When I visited Reception, it was a hive of purposeful activity. Children were well supported by teaching assistants. Children focused on counting and reading activities as well as creatively exploring ideas about space adventures.

The issues about phonics and early writing continued until this current year. You evaluated the poor phonics screening check results in 2016 and improved the training for teaching assistants involved in this work. However, this did not lead to

expected improvements. The new lead for English analysed successfully the 2017 results of the phonics screening check. She discovered that too few pupils were exposed to phase 5 phonics work. As a result, pupils progress to this phase now. When pupils misunderstand a phonics concept, teachers support them effectively with the specific activity causing concern. This has made the work manageable as well as being more focused on the particular issues for individual pupils. Another change to the phonics teaching is making sure that pupils recognise the pseudo words as well as the real ones; this had not been a secure aspect in the past.

Pupils' handwriting has improved since the last inspection. All pupils use cursive handwriting as soon as they are able to develop their writing. You have clear guidelines on the website to show how pupils should construct letters so that parents and carers can help their children to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a culture where risks are considered and managed well constantly within the school. The school's policies to ensure that pupils are well protected are in place. All staff, including governors, undertake training in child protection. The checks undertaken on staff, visitors and recruitment are stringent. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and from the influence of radical or extreme views. You protect pupils well once the school day begins. All volunteers have to attend workshops on safer practices in addition to the expected checks.

You have a higher number of pupils who have complex additional needs than the national average. You work with a wide range of outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils effectively. Pupils, parents, teachers and governors gain from the diversity of the school population. There is an acceptance of difference that is special to the school.

Inspection findings

- We looked at the range of writing taking place in the school as this has been a weaker area at both key stages 1 and 2. You have a comprehensive curriculum that allows pupils to develop their writing skills in a range of subjects. Teachers support pupils' development well. They are intervening at an early stage when pupils show a misunderstanding of grammar or punctuation. The majority of pupils are writing extensively; they show that they have the stamina needed to do well in the end-of-key-stage tests. Pupils are encouraged to proofread their work and correct it based on prior learning. This is a regular occurrence and pupils develop their vocabulary with pride. There are a few pupils who are writing less; these pupils need further support and opportunities to develop their writing repertoire. Also, there are some spelling errors that recur too frequently and these need to be eradicated speedily.
- Outcomes in mathematics have been poor for the past two years. Pupils were not given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding to reasoning and problem solving. You have reversed this situation effectively. Pupils' work challenges their intellect. Pupils work on calculations until they are

secure in the fluency of number problems. When pupils understand their learning in mathematics, they choose a level of challenge, depending on their ability. This is helping pupils to become resilient learners who are willing to solve demanding problems. Pupils articulate their mathematical learning in sophisticated terms. Their enjoyment in solving demanding problems was clear to see.

- The school has a high number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities as well as highly complex additional needs. You have ensured that staff in charge of this area of work are providing appropriate support. In addition, you have appointed a family support worker who is very proactive in her responses to family concerns. As a result, parents are willing to seek help as well as receive it. This level of cooperation ensures that pupils are well supported even in the most difficult circumstances. Staff are trained in therapeutic practices that equip the most vulnerable with survival strategies. There is a nurturing room where younger pupils learn to play and communicate cooperatively with one another. There have been many successes for the school in dealing with pupils who have education, health and care plans as well as complex needs. The school has a growing reputation locally and within the local authority for its skill in this area of work. You and the governing body are rightly proud of this and regard it as a vital community resource, which it is.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvement work started by leaders in mathematics, phonics and writing is maintained
- the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with challenge to deepen their thinking and write at greater depth
- the most able and middle-ability pupils achieve their full potential and gain results at a high standard in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders for mathematics and English, the chair and two governors, staff and pupils. I had a telephone conversation with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.

I visited lessons in all year groups in the school, focusing on mathematics, phonics and writing. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. I took into account 52 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 30 comments written by parents, plus the 18 responses from staff to the Ofsted online survey.