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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Tracy Flannaghan
Headteacher
Redesdale Primary School
Wiltshire Drive
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear
NE28 8TS

Dear Mrs Flannaghan

Short inspection of Redesdale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 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.

You have established a commitment to ongoing improvement that is shared by all staff and members of the governing body. You have strengthened leadership by giving senior and middle leaders responsibility for developing initiatives to improve pupils' outcomes and well-being. Your team has secured improvement in many priority areas. As a result of clear leadership, rigorous systems and effective teaching, pupils make good progress and achieve good and improving standards.

You and your team have addressed many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. In many lessons, pupils are given more time to explore problems. You are ensuring that better systems are in place to share good practice, while encouraging your team to consider more carefully how work is pitched towards pupils of differing abilities. You, your team and your governing body have a clear awareness of areas for improvement that are being addressed through your improvement plan. Self-evaluation is accurate and enhanced by regular checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Your deputy headteacher holds termly meetings with teachers to review the progress of pupils in their classes. These reviews provide a detailed breakdown of the progress of pupils with different abilities and needs. Teachers use these meetings and additional reflections to modify their teaching and interventions to address any areas of underachievement.

You have restructured leadership to give leaders more autonomy for school

improvement. You and your assistant headteacher have worked with the early years team to review many aspects of provision. New strategies led to a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development in 2017. Your deputy headteacher has worked with colleagues on initiatives to increase challenge in mathematics, while leaders have also successfully introduced measures to accelerate pupils' progress in reading. New initiatives are beginning to address weaker progress for some pupils in writing, particularly boys, although these initiatives are not consistently effective across all classes.

You have also developed leadership across the wider curriculum. Colleagues have specific responsibilities for subjects such as physical education, science and technology development. This contributes to a strong enrichment curriculum that enables pupils to develop broader insights into subjects and develop links with wider practitioners, such as writers, historians and environmentalists. Pupils value these opportunities to widen their experience and develop their self-confidence. While leaders are developing these wider opportunities, pupils are not consistently developing subject-specific skills in sufficient depth in subjects such as science, geography and history.

In 2017, your team responded more purposefully to the demands of the new national curriculum, with improving outcomes across all key stages. Pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, although their progress in writing was not as strong. The proportions of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above those seen nationally at key stages 1 and 2. Increased challenge enabled increasing proportions of pupils to work at a greater depth of understanding at key stage 1, although the proportions achieving these standards at the end of key stage 2 were below those seen nationally.

You and your team pay considerable attention to the emotional needs and the wider personal development of pupils. You have trained staff on accredited programmes to provide social and emotional support for pupils. Pupils recognise and value the actions taken by teachers and teaching assistants to support their emotional and physical well-being. You have worked with staff to establish a new behaviour policy that places an emphasis upon positive behaviour. Pupils value the tolerant and positive ethos you have engendered. They believe bullying is rare and are confident that adults will address any concerns that they have. You maintain a continual vigilance on pupils' welfare, encouraging all staff to note down any concerns or 'niggles', so that these can be addressed before they escalate.

Governors have a very strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have a clear and well-focused programme of visits to the school. You provide governors with regular updates on pupils' progress that they question at committee meetings and meetings of the full governing body. The chair of the governing body has more regular meetings to maintain a continual focus upon pupils' progress and welfare. Governors have well-defined roles that enable them to successfully provide appropriate support and challenge. The chair of the

governing body and his team have devised appropriate committee structures to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding is effective

School leaders and governors maintain a continual focus on pupils' welfare and have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school. The headteacher ensures that staff receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues. Any concerns over pupils' welfare are pursued thoroughly and recorded accurately. School leaders and governors carry out regular reviews of safeguarding practice. The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils feel that bullying is extremely rare and that staff are highly effective in addressing any potential instances of bullying. Pupils appreciate the actions that teachers take to promote their physical and mental well-being. Pupils have attended assemblies with representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to deepen their understanding of their personal safety. Pupils were able to discuss the actions they could take to remain safe, for example the actions needed to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- You have developed a positive ethos where staff demonstrate a strong understanding of pupils' needs. Staff have developed specific expertise to support pupils' social and emotional welfare. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and show respectful attitudes towards one another and adults. Levels of attendance are typically above average as pupils and parents value their education, although variance remains for some small groups of pupils.
- Leaders have developed successful approaches to encourage pupils' interest in reading. New class novels and wider reading texts are now better aligned to pupils' interests and abilities. These strategies are supporting improving rates of progress and enabling increasing proportions of pupils to work at greater depth. Outcomes in the phonics screening check were above those seen nationally in 2017.
- Leaders have introduced new strategies to improve teaching in mathematics and these have led to much-improved outcomes across the school over the past two years. Pupils have numerous opportunities to consolidate their understanding of number and calculations. Teachers are enhancing this by providing increasing opportunities to develop pupils' reasoning skills and apply them to problem-solving tasks.
- Leaders have recognised that standards in writing and rates of progress have not been as strong as those in reading, particularly for boys. New initiatives are helping to build pupils a stronger understanding of narrative structure and writing. Pupils are developing their understanding through new techniques, including representing texts through visual symbols. While there are signs of improvement, these initiatives are not being implemented consistently across all classes and variance in progress remains, particularly for boys.

- Teachers and governors are aware of the need to raise expectations and increase the proportions of pupils working at greater depths of understanding. Heightened challenge did contribute to much higher proportions of pupils achieving greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in 2017, and improvement at key stage 2. However, over a third of children who responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire said that they did not feel consistently challenged. The school's current data shows marked variance between subjects in the number of pupils teachers judge to be most-able, for example with 42 pupils deemed most-able in reading, compared to only 15 in writing.
- The assistant headteacher has worked with advisers from the local authority and her teaching team to strengthen provision in the early years foundation stage. Learning spaces have been enhanced with cues and prompts that encourage purposeful play. New reading and writing initiatives have strengthened pupils' emergent reading and writing skills. Parental engagement at school meetings and through the online sharing of resources is also supporting better provision. These developments contributed to a significant increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2017, although too few children have exceeded those standards over time.
- Your teaching team provide pupils with an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and activities that widen their experience and develop their self-confidence. A high proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take part in these activities. Trips to art galleries, museums, universities and places of worship have deepened children's cultural knowledge and their understanding of different faiths and cultures.
- While the wider curriculum is developed through a range of experiences and collaborative projects, pupils do not develop subject-specific skills in science, history and geography in sufficient depth. Although leaders are beginning to track pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects, pupils' progress is less developed in these subjects.
- Leaders and governors track the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully. Their actions enable these pupils to make good progress. Effective support is in place to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work with external partners to diagnose pupils' needs and develop programmes of support. The majority of parents attend review meetings to check the impact of support. These approaches help pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils develop a sense of social responsibility through their actions to support a range of charities. They develop a global awareness of environmental issues, such as the importance of conserving water.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing, particularly that of boys, is further accelerated through the consistent implementation of new initiatives

- teachers provide further challenge in lessons in order to increase the proportion of pupils, particularly boys, reaching a greater depth of understanding
- recent improvements in the early years are further accelerated to enable children to make more rapid progress
- leaders and teachers provide opportunities for pupils to make stronger progress and acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in science, history, geography and the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

As part of the inspection, I explored the actions that leaders were taking to increase the proportions of pupils working at greater depth. I also looked at initiatives to improve standards in writing, particularly for boys. In addition, I explored the quality of provision in the early years foundation stage. I also looked at the attendance of particular groups of pupils.

During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders. I also spoke to four members of the governing body, including the chair. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils less formally in lessons. I also talked to the school improvement partner from the local authority. I looked at learning in lessons with you. I also looked at pupils' work in books and folders. I examined the school improvement plan, as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, behaviour and attendance information and pupil tracking. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I took into account 33 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, 14 free-text responses, 159 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.