

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 March 2018

Mrs Sara Toole
Headteacher
East Rainton Primary School
School Road
East Rainton
Houghton le Spring
Tyne and Wear
DH5 9RA

Dear Mrs Toole

Short inspection of East Rainton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 October 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 and your well-established team seek to continuously improve the school. You tackle weaknesses in a timely manner and build effectively on what you already do well, such as enabling pupils' strong performance in reading and mathematics. You know the individual strengths of each member of staff and capitalise on this by ensuring that you deploy them to maximum effect. You have created a mutually supportive culture among staff and encourage them to share their expertise. All are committed to doing the very best for the children in their care. They regularly reflect on each other's performance and offer thoughts and suggestions about how to improve. Staff value the training they receive, which has helped to improve their performance.

The strong partnership you have forged with another school is a valuable source of improvement for staff and is a stimulus for other school developments. Visits to the school enabled you to re-evaluate the quality of pupils' handwriting and, as a result, you adopted a new, effective handwriting scheme. This has resulted in pupils writing more fluently. This partnership also enables you to enhance provision in a way you might not otherwise be able to afford, such as by sharing the cost of a counsellor to support vulnerable children and their families.

You and your team maintain a focus on high standards through regular monitoring. You review pupils' progress on a termly basis and regularly sample pupils' work.

Consequently, you act promptly when there is a dip in pupils' performance to ensure that their good progress is maintained. Regular monitoring also ensures that you identify shortcomings in teaching, which are quickly addressed.

You and your team take pride in your deep knowledge of every pupil and their family. You use this knowledge well to encourage pupils to flourish academically and socially by offering them the opportunity to take responsibility and help others. Older pupils in particular are keen to organise and run lunchtime clubs for younger pupils and to help out in the dinner hall. You encourage pupils to organise and deliver their own assemblies. A very wide range of after-school clubs and extensive opportunities to learn to play musical instruments are just two of the ways you try to support each pupil to find their individual talents.

Governors are proud of the school and keen to ensure that the local community continues to benefit from a good quality of education. They apply their expertise well. Those with professional experience in areas such as safeguarding, finance and education use their knowledge to provide appropriate support and challenge. They ask you probing questions about pupils' progress, and their regular visits to school to speak to staff and pupils ensures that they have a good level of knowledge. Their employment of an independent consultant gives them added reassurance that the school maintains its effectiveness. Governors use improvement plans to hold leaders to account and to evaluate expenditure of the pupil premium. However, these plans lack sufficient detail and clarity to enable the level of challenge they demonstrate at other times.

You and your team have largely tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Standards in writing at the end of key stage 2 and the end of early years were broadly in line with the national average in 2017. The books you and I scrutinised on inspection, alongside your performance information, demonstrated that all groups of pupils are making strong progress and improving the quality of their writing across the school. This includes in key stage 1, where standards were lower in 2017. You have already identified that sometimes pupils, and particularly the most able, are not challenged as much as they could be in this subject. Action has been taken and, as a result, pupils receive work that is more demanding more frequently. However, occasionally in some year groups, tasks to develop grammar and punctuation skills are undemanding and pupils copy work into their books. At other times, teachers do not expect pupils to write as much as they are capable of doing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team's deep knowledge of each pupil is the basis of your work to ensure that they are safe. Any concerns are carefully noted and documented in a systematic way. They are followed up diligently when it is necessary to do so. Staff training is up to date and staff are clear about the procedures to follow to keep children safe. Appropriate and rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults working in the school. An external consultant with safeguarding expertise is engaged to provide external scrutiny and ensure that policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are clear about the consequences of inappropriate

behaviour. They say that behaviour is good most of the time and that adults address misbehaviour promptly. Instances of name-calling are infrequent and dealt with. School records and parents endorse this view. Pupils have a good knowledge of bullying and say adults deal with it if it occurs. Their understanding of how to keep themselves safe is enhanced by a good range of visitors such as the police. Pupils know the actions they need to take to keep safe online.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have improved the teaching of writing and consequently pupils make good progress. Teachers help to develop pupils' writing in a systematic way so that knowledge builds up in a logical sequence, which is then applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils are, therefore, clear about the approaches they must take to composing and improving their writing. They write at length accurately applying the grammar, punctuation and spelling they have been taught. They become adept at editing and improving their work because of the clear guidance that teachers supply. Good presentation and clear handwriting are indicative of the care and positive attitude pupils apply to their work. The good quality of work in English books is maintained when they are writing in other subjects.
- Staff use effective strategies to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in the early years and in key stage 1. They use their good subject knowledge to teach phonics accurately and ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to apply and practise new knowledge in both reading and writing. Outcomes in the phonics screening check are typically in line with the national average, with nearly all pupils achieving the required standard by the end of key stage 1.
- Effective use is made of pupil premium funding. Leaders deploy additional staff carefully where there is most need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils progress well and their individual needs, whether academic, social or emotional, are met. Close attention is paid to checking that pupils stay on track to meet the expectations for their age, and they are given appropriate extra support to boost their performance. However, a below-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils attained the higher standards in key stages 1 and 2, with the exception of reading in key stage 2. Leaders acknowledge that further work is needed to ensure that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards of attainment in all year groups.
- Leaders were quick to ensure that actions were taken to support the key stage 1 leader to maintain pupils' good progress during a period of staff absence. The curriculum was reorganised so the key stage 1 leader could maintain a clear overview of standards. Appropriate training and support were provided to ensure that the key stage 1 leader could confidently analyse pupils' progress and performance. These actions have ensured that pupils' progress has continued to be good. A higher proportion of pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to meet expectations for their age by the end of the year than in previous years.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress and are well supported by appropriately trained staff. The SEN coordinator has a very good grasp of the quality of support for this group of pupils. Through regular monitoring, she quickly identified that staff needed help to improve their planning so that pupils could progress well. Training and support have ensured that

planning is now targeted more accurately. Scrutiny of work and performance information confirms that pupils' progress is good and accelerating.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils and particularly the most able are provided with challenging tasks to further improve their writing progress
- leaders' plans for school improvement and the use of the pupil premium have clear actions, timescales and measurable outcomes
- a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain the higher standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Waugh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the coordinator of special educational needs and the leader of key stage 1. I also met all teachers and teaching assistants. You and I visited lessons in each class. I met with a group of five governors and had a telephone conversation with a consultant who works with the school. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school, including their views of pupils' behaviour. I listened to some pupils read their own work and looked in pupils' workbooks when in lessons. I also conducted a work scrutiny with you. I considered the 14 responses from the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents. I also reviewed the 44 online pupil responses and looked at the school's own pupil survey. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding, attendance and governance. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in statutory assessments and I looked at the school's website.