

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 May 2018

Mrs Sarah Sivieri
Headteacher
Hayes Meadow Primary School
Spode Avenue
Handsacre
Rugeley
Staffordshire
WS15 4EU

Dear Mrs Sivieri

Short inspection of Hayes Meadow Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

'Be the best you can be' is not only the school motto but your aim for everyone connected with the school. Since you became headteacher in September 2016, you have worked with determination and drive to create a shared vision with high expectations at the core. You have taken effective action to bring about the changes needed to ensure that the school is providing a good education for each and every pupil. This is resulting in improved outcomes for pupils, a skilled and knowledgeable staff team and governors who know how to provide effective challenge and support.

Since the last inspection, there have been some significant staffing changes. The headteacher at the time of the last inspection retired. The chair of governors resigned and there have been several changes in the teaching staff. In 2016, standards declined as staff were unsure of the requirements of the new national curriculum. They were not clear about the end-of-year expectations for their pupils. As a result, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below national averages. Very few pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reached the higher standard.

You halted this decline and, in the words of the staff, have 'transformed the school'. You are ambitious for the pupils and staff and want them all to succeed. Rigorous

performance standards underpin your high expectations of staff, both professionally and personally. You challenge, support and coach the staff, who value the training opportunities that you provide. All staff have a comprehensive understanding of age-related expectations now. They know how to help pupils reach the higher standards. Staff work closely as a team and support one another. Staff say that they feel valued and believe in themselves. The quality of teaching has improved rapidly. There is a more consistent approach, and the same high expectations can be seen in the majority of classrooms. As a result, outcomes for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 rose in 2017. The percentage of pupils at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than the national percentage. More pupils reached the higher standards than in the previous year, although this figure was still below the national figure, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

You are developing leadership at all levels. You ensure that lines of accountability are clear. You work with middle leaders to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Several are new to the school or to their leadership role. You give them clear direction and provide opportunities for training. You work alongside them in the initial stages to model and demonstrate how to be an effective leader. They visit other schools to see good practice. As a result, they now have the knowledge and skills to carry out their job more effectively. They understand their role in school improvement and are now taking appropriate action. They share your vision and high expectations.

The school is a very calm and orderly community. You set high expectations for behaviour. Clear systems and procedures enable everyone to understand the rules. Staff apply them consistently. Children enjoy receiving rewards and understand that there are consequences when things go wrong. Relationships are positive and there is a warm atmosphere across the school. Everyone is valued.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They know that their children make good progress and are well cared for. They say that their children want to come to school, even when it is the weekend or a school holiday. Parents feel confident that they can talk to staff about any issue and will be listened to. They say that there is good communication between home and school. Parents of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities particularly value the support they receive. Many comment on the effective provision for children with speech and language difficulties. The impact you are having on the school is recognised. Several parents stated that the school is much better than it was because of your high expectations.

Governance has improved since the last inspection, when it was identified as an area for improvement. Governors now understand their role as a strategic, critical friend. They understand how to support and challenge, while holding leaders to account. They acknowledge the learning journey they have been on since the last inspection. Governors are now well informed and know much more about the school. They ask appropriate questions and carry out regular visits. They are developing effective links with key leaders in school. This helps deepen their understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They share your vision

for the school. New governors have been appointed, following a recent skills audit. Governors are now a stronger team, united with a common purpose.

Pupils are a delight. They behave well and want to learn. Their enthusiasm for learning rubs off on each other. They cooperate and support each other well in lessons. Pupils are articulate and have well-formed opinions, which they express confidently. They understand what is expected of them. The school values are clearly understood by pupils and referred to regularly. They are keen to show resilience and determination. Several of them talked about being curious in their learning. They are proud to belong to Hayes Meadow Primary School. One pupil's statement summed up so much of what the vast majority of pupils said and believe:

'I love my school because I walk in knowing that I am going to learn something new, that I will be safe and happy while I am here, that I will be challenged and have fun learning and I will leave a better person at the end of the day.'

Areas identified at the last inspection as needing improvement have been addressed. You ensure a continued focus on feedback to children about their work. This is integral to the improvements in teaching and learning that you have been making. As a result of these improvements, more pupils are reaching the higher standards currently.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have developed a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Highly organised, effective systems underpin the work that keeps children safe. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They know to cover the screen with 'the dolphin' if they see something unpleasant. They understand that they should not share personal information with strangers. The worry boxes are used well by pupils, who trust adults at school to help them sort out any problems they may have. Staff are skilled in using every opportunity and any incident to teach pupils about staying safe.

Regular training ensures that all staff understand the part they play in keeping children safe. They are well informed, vigilant and take these responsibilities seriously. Teaching and non-teaching staff know they can raise any concern with the designated safeguarding leaders. Leaders are tenacious in following-up concerns in an effort to ensure that families and children receive appropriate support when it is needed. Several parents commented on the excellent support they had received from the school. The governor responsible for safeguarding checks that procedures are followed diligently. The governors acknowledge the huge improvements you have made to the safeguarding practice in the school and the excellent links you have developed with a range of external agencies.

Inspection findings

- My first focus for the inspection was to understand how effectively leaders are

ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and closing the differences in achievement with other pupils. No disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2017. Fewer disadvantaged pupils reached greater depth at the end of key stage 1, especially in writing and mathematics.

- Involvement in a local authority project which focuses on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact. Pupils are invited to additional mathematical sessions. Teachers lead the highly focused pre-teaching sessions before school starts in the morning. They focus specifically on mathematical concepts, vocabulary and skills. Leaders monitor attendance at each session and the progress individual pupils make. Gaps in knowledge are identified and planning adjusted to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are able to work with greater confidence and understanding in their mathematics lessons. The most able pupils start working quickly on problem-solving activities. Consequently more pupils are working at greater depth. Working before school has also increased rates of attendance and ensured that pupils are in school on time.
- A comprehensive tracking system has been put in place. Leaders monitor the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils very closely. They use regular opportunities to discuss pupils' progress with teachers. A change in the school timetable has enabled teachers to assess pupils' work thoroughly part way through the morning. Pupils found to be struggling receive instant intervention and support, while those making rapid progress are challenged further. Additional adults are well informed about pupils' needs and are able to provide effective support. Misconceptions are dealt with quickly. Governors take a keen interest in evaluating the impact of these initiatives. They ensure that additional funding is spent appropriately. School assessment shows much stronger progress over time.
- The second focus for the inspection was to look carefully at how well boys are being taught to read. In the past, boys have not made as much progress in reading as girls. Many of them have not reached the expected standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2. Leaders have put effective systems in place to improve the focus on reading. Phonics is taught effectively from an early age. Boys join in phonics sessions as much as the girls. They use their phonics to spell different words and make connections with words they have read. Adults are skilled in providing appropriate support and high challenge. They use questions to encourage pupils to think carefully about what they are reading. Pupils discuss different books during guided-reading sessions and find out the meaning of new words. Boys in Year 1 who read to the inspector could talk about their books in great detail. They used a range of strategies when reading, including phonics.
- The leadership of reading has been strengthened. Leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and take appropriate action to improve outcomes. There is regular monitoring and analysis of progress in reading. Boys attending an after-school reading group are developing their skills and making faster progress. Leaders promote reading and it is given a high profile across the school. The learning environment reflects the wide range of books being studied. Boys engage enthusiastically with the 'rainbow reading' and 'readathon' competitions. They enjoy the challenge and associated rewards. Pupils have a passion for reading. They talk about favourite authors and why they like certain books. Older

boys use information books skilfully, for example to find out about endangered animals. They know why reading is important. Pupils say it helps develop their vocabulary which in turn helps their writing and speaking and communication skills. As a result, outcomes in reading rose in 2017 and were above national levels.

- During the inspection, the development of writing was examined closely. Standards in writing have been variable but rose significantly at the end of 2017. This was a direct result of increased expectations. You firmly believe and states: 'There is no magic to improving writing other than regular opportunities to write, higher expectations and a clear purpose for each piece of writing.' Consequently you ensure that all staff know what is expected. Models of good practice are shared and discussed. Minimum expectations are in place for the presentation of written work. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that policies are followed. Comprehensive feedback from monitoring activities is shared with staff. As a result, there is greater consistency in the teaching of writing across the school.
- High-quality texts are used to extend pupils' vocabulary and stimulate ideas for writing. Writing is also linked to the themes being studied. The learning environment is used to support and celebrate writing. Pupils write every day in a range of curriculum areas. Cursive writing has been introduced from Reception. Pupils rise to the challenge of presenting their work to a high standard. Pupils see themselves as writers. They edit and improve their work. Pupils are eager to share what they are writing; they are rightly proud of what they achieve. Pupils' books evidence the strong progress being made. High-quality work is evident across the school. Leaders set ambitious writing targets. As a result of the increased expectations, these targets are now in reach.
- Finally, we agreed to focus on how well pupils are developing a breadth of knowledge and deeper understanding across all subjects to ensure that they achieve well. Leaders have a passion for delivering an exciting curriculum which engages all children in learning. It is built on a progression of skills and knowledge, underpinned by high expectations. Sufficient time is given to different subject areas to enable deeper learning. Pupils respond well and finish work to a high standard. For example, completed models of terracotta warriors were intricately detailed and finished with care. Rich experiences, such as visits to castles, farms and museums, are used to bring the curriculum alive. Enrichment days in school enable good practice to be shared and interest in the subject to be developed. Pupils enjoy extending their knowledge and many do extra work at home to find out more. Teachers are beginning to use age-related expectations effectively to assess which pupils are on track. Assessment across the wider curriculum is in the early stages and the impact is yet to be fully realised.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continue to rise so that they reach the standards of which they are capable
- all staff continue to have high expectations across the curriculum so that more

pupils can attain greater depth in a wide range of subjects

- assessment across the wider curriculum is further developed and embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I held discussions with you about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. We discussed information about pupils' current progress and attainment and talked about significant changes since the last inspection of the school.
- I met with a group of three governors, including the vice chair. I also met with a group of teaching and non-teaching staff. I considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- I carried out learning walks and visits to classrooms with you to look at the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning and progress. During these visits, I spoke with pupils and discussed their work with them. I looked at a range of pupils' books with you.
- I talked to a group of pupils to seek their views.
- I met with parents before school started and considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's Parent View on-line questionnaire. I also considered the 21 free-text responses.
- I looked at a range of documents including: your school self-evaluation document and school development plan; minutes of directors' meetings; and procedures for safeguarding and for checking the suitability of staff to work with pupils.
- I checked the school website.