

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Clive Maddison  
Headteacher  
Ravenswood Primary School  
Ravenswood Road  
Heaton  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Tyne and Wear  
NE6 5TU

Dear Mr Maddison

### **Short inspection of Ravenswood Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 2018 with Steve Shaw, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 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 and your deputy headteacher work effectively together and have established an ethos of collaborative and shared leadership. You are both committed and determined to continue to improve standards and experiences for pupils. You know your school well, and you are candid about the areas that need extra care and attention. As a result, the school is in a prime position to continue its improvement journey.

You are rightly proud of the broad, balanced and extensively enriched curriculum you offer to pupils. You have placed high importance on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects, for example in history, geography and science. The curriculum inspires and enthuses pupils. They speak confidently about how the topics they study develop their skills in reading and writing. It is clear to see in pupils' topic books, in both key stages 1 and 2, how pupils are benefiting from opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills. The presentation of pupils' work and the quality of their handwriting is impressive. Notwithstanding the extensive opportunities pupils have to write, you are determined that the momentum to improve pupils' progress in writing will continue, particularly in developing pupils' spelling skills and strategies, so that standards of attainment in writing improve.

You have also placed importance on developing pupils' skills in music, art and physical education (PE). For example, key stage 2 pupils benefit from engaging in

swimming and dancing lessons. Extra-curricular activities are offered extensively; for example, pupils can take part in cricket, the gardening club and the choir. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the wide range of activities they can engage in and how such activities are contributing to developing their personal and social skills. Consequently, the whole curriculum offer provides pupils with a firm foundation to move successfully on to their next phase in education.

The previous inspection identified the need for leaders to further improve aspects of the quality of teaching in the school. You have successfully put in place a range of initiatives so that pupils' achievement and welfare are at the forefront of all monitoring activities and discussions. As a result, teaching is highly effective across the school.

Most learning activities engage pupils and meet their needs. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, pupils enthusiastically engaged in their learning when using a wide range of adjectives to make their writing more interesting. The teacher's effective planning ensured that low prior attaining pupils had appropriate support, so they could develop their skills alongside their peers. Pupils who needed extra challenge were catered for as they were given activities that really got them thinking more deeply about their choice of adjectives.

Teachers routinely build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Questioning is used effectively by most staff. Where it is used well, teachers develop, extend and probe pupils' understanding. Increasingly, teachers intervene to support those pupils who might not have grasped a particular idea. However, you recognise there are still a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that you need to iron out. This is especially important as you continue your drive to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Despite these areas which you have identified, the positive impact of teaching on current pupils' learning and progress is clear to see across a wide range of year groups and subjects, particularly so in mathematics.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff are visible and take time to speak to pupils and welcome them into school on a morning. Staff overwhelmingly agree they are proud to work at the school. They are in complete agreement that the school is well led and managed and that they are encouraged to take risks and be innovative in their teaching so that pupils get the best experiences possible. Staff also took great pride in informing inspectors that leaders take into account their workload and how activities that staff are asked to complete all contribute to teaching and improving pupils' experiences and outcomes.

Governors are passionate and proud of the school, its achievements and the quality of education it provides to pupils. They are proud of the school's standing in the local community. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. They are well informed about the school and, as a result, they have an insightful understanding of those areas that need attention. Governors are in an excellent position to continue to challenge and hold you, and other leaders, to account well. Consequently, they continue to support you effectively in driving up standards.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Ravenswood Primary School is a truly inclusive, diverse and tolerant school. The school is characterised by mutual respect and strong relationships. Pupils are well looked after and cared for by staff.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular training has ensured that staff, including governors, are vigilant in identifying and referring any concerns about children's welfare and safety. Your behaviour and family support officers are highly skilled in supporting pupils, and their families, when it is needed. Those who need additional help and support are given it in abundance. Pupils' attitudes are positive. They know if they speak to staff about an issue or a concern, it will be sorted quickly and effectively.

Pupils of all ages said that they feel safe in school and that they enjoy school. This is particularly evident as pupils attend school regularly. Close monitoring of attendance enables the school to target families where pupils are persistently absent. As a result, persistent absenteeism has reduced. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and value the work that the school does for their children.

## **Inspection findings**

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in key stages 1 and 2 was an area of focus during the inspection. This is because in key stage 2 in 2017, the progress of these groups of pupils lagged behind that of others in the school and nationally.
- You, supported well by other leaders, have implemented a highly effective and informative system to monitor and track pupils' progress. Leaders and class teachers review pupils' progress, against age-related expectations, regularly and frequently. As a result, teachers know specific groups of pupils well and plan increasingly effectively to meet their individual needs. Support staff are deployed well and work alongside a variety of pupils so that they can support and keep a close eye on their progress and learning. Where pupils lag behind in their knowledge and/or understanding, bespoke support and intervention is initiated. This is providing pupils with opportunities to develop at a quicker pace, and it is giving pupils every opportunity not to fall behind their peers. Expectations are typically high in classrooms. Pupils are checked quickly and few lag behind in their learning. Inspection evidence indicates that these groups of pupils are making better progress over time, especially in reading.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now well served at Ravenswood. The special educational needs coordinator has implemented a robust system for checking and monitoring SEN pupils' progress. Information recorded about pupils is detailed and captures the impact of the school's actions. Links with other agencies serve pupils well and give them further opportunities to overcome any barriers they may have. High-quality teaching is a cornerstone of practice for these pupils. Pupils' resilience and confidence are developing well. However, you

and other leaders are not complacent, and you recognise that progress for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities needs to improve further to be more consistent with their peers.

- During the inspection, another area of focus was to check the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' writing skills. This is because in 2017, published data shows that progress in writing throughout key stage 2 lagged behind that in reading and mathematics. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard, and the proportion achieving greater depth, in writing at the end of Year 2 in 2017 fell below the national average.
- You, your deputy headteacher and year leaders have given writing a high profile across the school. The development of writing begins from the very start of children's journeys in the school. In the early years, children are encouraged to develop their fine motor skills and experiment with letters and words through pictures and appropriate reading materials. Children's good progress results in an above average proportion achieving at least the level expected nationally in writing by the end of the Reception Year. This prepares them well for the demands of key stage 1.
- Leaders' concerted efforts have provided a wider range of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills effectively throughout key stages 1 and 2. Work in pupils' books indicates pupils' progress in writing is improving. Pupils' writing is well presented. Opportunities for pupils to practise writing for different purposes are good.
- In key stage 1, pupils are becoming fluent and accurate when using punctuation, including for effect. Pupils are developing a greater awareness and understanding of how to use a wide range of sentence structures. Teachers are providing more opportunities across the various curriculum subjects to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and unfamiliar words. This is enabling more pupils to develop their reading fluency and, in turn, is leading to improved achievement in writing.
- In key stage 2, pupils are becoming increasingly confident writers, using a wide range of language techniques in order to engage the reader for different purposes and audiences. Teachers encourage pupils routinely to use dictionaries and pupils are encouraged to think about and use more ambitious vocabulary.
- Writing portfolios are used well to track pupils' writing progression throughout each year group and throughout the school. Collecting pupils' written work together in this way not only celebrates their achievements, but also enables teachers to reflect on, and fully get to grips with, the demands of writing in each year group. As a result of your, and other leaders' actions, achievement in writing is improving for current pupils. Even so, you acknowledge that continuing to further improve this across the school, so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the expected and higher standards by the end of Year 6, remains an important next step.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in the quality of teaching are maintained and a consistent approach reached, particularly so that the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is as good as that of their peers
- the momentum to improve pupils' progress in writing continues, particularly developing pupils' spelling skills, so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the expected and the higher standard by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Darren Stewart  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and other leaders, including governors, and staff. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they arrived at school with their children and the school's achievement partner. During meetings, we discussed the school's self-evaluation document, development plan, pupils' current assessment information and current strategies to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. The school's single central record was scrutinised and discussions took place about a wide range of safeguarding procedures, training and pupils' welfare, safety, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons, jointly with leaders, across the school and across each phase of the school. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and experiences. They also scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work in each phase, particularly focusing on pupils' writing. Inspectors spoke with pupils both formally and informally to gain their views and to hear some of them read. Inspectors also considered the results of Ofsted's online questionnaires, including the 97 parent responses to Parent View and the 21 staff responses. No pupils completed the questionnaire.