

6 July 2018

Mrs Zoe Rollinson
Headteacher
Lanesfield Primary School
Newman Avenue
Lanesfield
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV4 6BZ

Dear Mrs Rollinson

Short inspection of Lanesfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 February 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 lead and manage the school well. Since taking on the role of headteacher you have led the school with vision and drive. You have ensured that pupils' learning and well-being are at the centre of the school's work.

You are supported well by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and phase leaders. Together, you ensure that strong teaching and high teacher expectations are modelled to teachers across the school. While some phase leaders are recently appointed and new to their roles, their impact is evident in the improved and improving quality of teaching.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their skills and expertise to allocate responsibilities for monitoring key aspects of the school's work. They provide you with a balance of constructive challenge and support.

Your team has made sure that recommendations from the previous inspection, such as increasing challenge for the most able pupils and developing the skills of subject leaders, have been acted upon. Nevertheless, numerous staff changes in recent years have caused some improvement actions to be delayed.

You and other school leaders rightly acknowledge that standards in writing have not been as strong as those seen in reading and mathematics. You have put several actions in place to tackle this, which are improving standards. You also know that improving the consistency of teaching in key stage 1 and the attendance of a small group of pupils are key improvement priorities.

Pupils say they enjoy school, value their lessons and are able to talk about their ambitions for the future.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You promote a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All those involved with the school community are committed to keeping pupils safe. Leaders have made sure that all the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are completed and recorded correctly.

You arrange frequent training for staff and governors in different aspects of safeguarding, including the risks that pupils may face from radicalisation and extremism. Staff know how to identify any signs of harm and take appropriate action if they are concerned.

You keep well-organised records, work closely with external agencies and are quick to challenge agencies or individuals where necessary. Your drive ensures that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Pupils are taught about the risks they may face in society. When speaking with pupils, they explained how they keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and social media.

Pupils told me that they feel safe and well looked after at school, and that they trust adults to support them if they have a concern. They said that adults were very fair and supportive and recognised the impact of their work on their safety within the school.

Pupils said that bullying was rare, but that sometimes pupils do 'fall out', although 'it usually doesn't last long'. They could explain that managing upsets was sometimes part of developing friendships.

Pupil mentors provide support for vulnerable and younger pupils. These positive role models recognise that, on occasions, events occur outside of school that can have an impact upon pupils' moods and relationships with others while in school.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, pupils have continued to make good progress, which is reflected in the standards reached at the end of Year 6. In 2017, for instance, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. At the higher standard, performance in reading and mathematics was also above average, but this was not the case in writing. Indeed, over time, progress and attainment in writing has not been as strong as reading and mathematics. Consequently, you have identified improving pupils' writing as a school priority. The impact of your work in this area was a key focus during my inspection.
- You and your team have implemented a range of different techniques to improve the quality of teaching and raise teachers' expectations of pupils' writing. School leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that teaching is more consistent across the school. In the early years and in key stage 1, pupils are encouraged to talk about and develop their ideas before starting to write. They are also supported with helpful word lists to develop their vocabulary. As a result, younger pupils are becoming more confident in their writing and are developing stamina to write more. Pupils are given clear guidance to ensure that text is written correctly, with punctuation and grammar appropriate for their age. In another initiative, called 'writing warriors', older pupils work alongside younger pupils to coach and support their writing. This serves two purposes: older pupils have the opportunity to practise and develop their skills and younger pupils have the opportunity to learn new ones. In response, outcomes in writing at key stage 1 are improving. However, progress is faster in some classes than others. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing vary from one class to another. This lack of consistency holds pupils back at times.
- In key stage 2, teaching is more consistent. In classrooms, there is a clear focus on getting pupils to extend their vocabulary and be adventurous in their writing. Bright, colourful learning displays throughout key stage 2 prompt pupils to experiment with new words in order to improve the quality of their sentences. In Year 6, for example, pupils were quick to research the meanings behind unfamiliar words. Some had developed their own word banks and clearly enjoyed competing with one another to come up with appropriate uses for new words they had learned. In addition, older pupils have taken part in national writing competitions and enjoyed some successes.
- Carefully chosen classroom topics ensure that pupils' imaginations are captured. They are eager to write and take great pride in their work. This keenness and pleasure was summed up by one pupil, who explained: 'I get to write about things that I am really interested in. I like to write about history and imagine what life was like in Ancient Egypt.' This culture of high expectations is helping to raise standards in writing. However, you and your leaders know that there is still more to do to improve standards further in writing for pupils in key stage 1.
- About a third of pupils in the school are classed as disadvantaged and my next line of enquiry focused on the progress made by these pupils. An analysis of test results reveals that, as with other pupils in the school, the performance of disadvantaged pupils in writing was not as strong as it is in reading and

mathematics. Since 2016, when you carried out a review of the use and impact of pupil premium funding, staff awareness of these pupils' needs has increased. Teachers and teaching assistants use a wide range of techniques to help disadvantaged pupils make faster progress. Additional support is carefully targeted at individuals or small groups and this work is having positive effects. An increasing proportion of the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2, for example, are now working at higher standards in writing, reading and mathematics. Recent results show that they are performing almost as well as other pupils who are reaching the higher standard nationally.

- Next, I looked at the work of senior and middle leaders to drive school improvement since the previous inspection. Since the last inspection there have been many staff changes. A completely new leadership team is in place and half of the teaching staff team has changed. This has caused some improvement actions to be delayed. However, it is clear that routines are in place to share and learn from good practice. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching has been maintained and, in some cases, strengthened. This is most evident in key stage 2 classes, where teachers explain tasks clearly and ask questions that push pupils to think and work hard.
- Attendance is below average and has been for the last three years. School leaders have rightly identified this as a concern. A home school liaison officer has been employed to assist with building strong relationships between school and home and this has helped families to see the value and relevance of education. Rewards have been introduced and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. Nevertheless, a few pupils continue to miss too much school unnecessarily. This is a bad habit that limits their education.
- During the inspection, a small minority of survey responses expressed concerns regarding the behaviour of some older pupils. In response, I looked into this. I found that pupils were well behaved in lessons, at breaktimes and when they moved through the school. School records show that poor behaviour can happen from time to time, but that such incidents are dealt with properly and in line with the school's well-thought-out behaviour policy. Pupils who find it hard to manage aspects of their behaviour get the appropriate support they need. It is also clear that the school encourages pupils to be responsible, act as positive role models, and to take on jobs that help the school day to run smoothly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- share the good practice that is in school to improve the quality of teaching and learning further in key stage 1, particularly teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing
- work with families and other organisations to improve the attendance of pupils who miss school regularly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Edward Masterson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior and phase leaders. I held a meeting with three governors, including the chair. I spoke with pupils in class, in structured settings and informally. I also spoke to parents. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised pupils' work in writing.

I made visits to all classes, alongside senior leaders. I also visited the Nursery. A wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, school development, welfare, behaviour and attendance, was scrutinised. I discussed the school's journey of improvement with a representative of the local authority.

I considered the responses of 14 parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys, and the school's own internal surveys.