

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 July 2018

Mrs Kay Godfrey
Principal
Gooseacre Primary Academy
Gooseacre Avenue
Off Merrill Road
Thurnscoe
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 0NU

Dear Mrs Godfrey

Short inspection of Gooseacre Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the last inspection and your appointment as principal of the school shortly after, you and your leaders have continued to focus on school improvement work. This has resulted in strong progress at key stage 2 in 2015 and 2016, placing the school in the top 10% of schools nationally, and in line with national averages in 2017. Your actions since the last inspection have enabled you to create a culture of respect and teamwork across the whole school. Together with the leaders of the Astrea Academy Trust, you have ensured that governance is a real strength of the school. School leaders have invested heavily in the professional development of senior and middle leaders and have appointed knowledgeable staff in key positions. As a result, this has strengthened the leadership and management of the school even further and there is great capacity to achieve your aspiration for the school to become outstanding.

Staff at all levels demonstrate a clear passion and commitment to the education of children and pupils at your school. They wholeheartedly share your vision and have

the pupils at the centre of what they do. Leaders have developed thorough progress-tracking systems to identify correctly areas of the school that need improvement and to support and improve performance in those areas. As a result, the progress and attainment of pupils have remained strong since the last inspection.

School leaders have successfully dealt with the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. At the last inspection, the school was asked to raise the achievement of all pupils, particularly the most able, in writing and mathematics. Leaders acted swiftly, identifying any teachers who needed targeted support and providing focused professional development opportunities. You reviewed your curriculum for mathematics and writing and ensured that teachers challenged the most-able more. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly. The school works closely with other schools from the Astrea Academy Trust and other partners to check the accuracy of its assessments. As a result, progress and attainment for all pupils, including the disadvantaged and the most able pupils, have improved and there are high expectations across the whole school.

At the last inspection you were also asked to strengthen leadership and management by further developing the skills of middle leaders, so that they know how well pupils are doing and are better placed to help improve achievement. Since the last inspection, you and the governors have appointed leaders with responsibility for literacy in key stage 1 and in key stage 2, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for the early years provision. You have extended your senior leadership team to include these new middle leaders and, together with the trust, you have supported them effectively with appropriate professional development opportunities. As a result, middle leaders are effective in using the school's extensive progress-tracking systems and know their areas very well.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. You and your safeguarding team know your pupils very well. Staff and governors receive up-to-date training on child protection, including on the dangers of radicalisation. Staff monitor the welfare of pupils and children closely and know what to do if they have any concerns. The school shares information with external agencies in a timely and effective way. Leaders take action swiftly and monitor the impact of actions closely. You and your business manager ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils.

The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. As a result, attitudes to learning, behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school are exemplary. You have built a culture of mutual respect across the whole school. Pupils are polite, play very well together and are considerate to each other.

Pupils reported that they feel safe at school and know what to do if they have any

concerns. They also say that bullying is rare but that when it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly. Inspection evidence and the views of staff and parents and carers support this.

Inspection findings

- Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that pupils in the school have high levels of attendance. The school's family liaison officer uses the thorough systems for tracking and analysing attendance effectively. She ensures that the support for pupils at risk of low attendance is timely. Leaders have raised the profile and importance of good attendance through a number of initiatives, including improved communication with parents and rewards. As a result, whole-school attendance has improved and is now in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who are persistently absent from school has decreased since 2017. However, the rate of persistent absence for pupils currently in the school has been disproportionately affected by a small number of pupils and remains above national averages. Leaders are not complacent, and this remains an area for improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are very good. Leaders track behaviour incidents thoroughly and analyse patterns of behaviour frequently. The pastoral team provides effective and timely support for pupils who need it, including support for mental health. As a result, fixed-term exclusions have decreased significantly and there have been no fixed-term exclusions during the current academic year.
- Since the last inspection in 2014, you have reviewed the quality of teaching and learning across the school and acted swiftly to eradicate any weak teaching. Leaders have implemented thorough and robust monitoring systems which show that the quality of teaching is good or better in all lessons. Our joint visits to classrooms, together with discussions and scrutiny of other evidence, confirm that you are skilled in accurately evaluating the quality of teaching. Staff work together to develop further areas of teaching and learning, as identified by leaders. Teachers use targeted questioning effectively to probe pupils' deeper understanding and support their progress. As a result, all teachers challenge pupils more, including the disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- You have reviewed the curriculum for mathematics and writing. Your deputy headteacher has reviewed the teaching of mathematics and introduced a range of initiatives across the whole school, including the daily mental arithmetic tasks. A middle leader coordinating science started in September 2017. You continually review the curriculum for writing to ensure that pupils, including the most able pupils, are inspired and write more creatively. They now have a range of opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects, including science. During our joint visits to lessons and through the scrutiny of pupils' books, you were able to demonstrate clearly the impact of your actions in these areas.
- In 2016, the progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was well above national averages, following a similar trend from the previous year. In 2017, progress was in line with national averages. A small number of pupils had a disproportionate impact on the progress and attainment

of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6, especially the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards, which leaders expected. In 2017, there was an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Also, in 2017, outcomes for all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils, improved at the end of key stage 1. Although you were disappointed with some of the key stage 2 outcomes in 2017, leaders acted quickly and decisively and correctly identified specific areas that needed improvement. You swiftly implemented action plans to support pupils who needed it. As a result, the school's assessment information, inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate a rapid improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and science for the current Year 6 pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Inspection evidence also indicates improvement in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- persistent absence continues to decrease further for all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnsley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, middle leaders, staff, governors and trustees. I also met with the chief executive officer and the executive director of education of the Astrea Academy Trust. I spoke to a range of pupils and parents. I listened to pupils read and together we conducted tours of the school and lessons, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. I also, alongside senior and middle leaders, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects.

I scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, parental views, pupils' views and school improvement. I

took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 15 extended responses from parents. I also took account of the four responses to the staff questionnaire.