

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 September 2018

Ms Alison Bailey
Executive Headteacher
Tilney St Lawrence Community Primary School
School Road
Tilney St Lawrence
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE34 4QZ

Dear Ms Bailey

Short inspection of Tilney St Lawrence Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong leadership has steered the school effectively over the last year, continuing to focus on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You are well supported by your leadership team, whose members share your ambition to ensure the very best outcomes for all your pupils. This has been achieved in a climate of change as both the school and wider federation have restructured.

You and your senior leaders have established effective systems and processes for checking the quality of teaching and ensuring that teachers check on pupils' learning. You have restructured and redefined leadership roles so that leaders are more involved and know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas.

During our learning walk, pupils showed positive attitudes to their learning. They were polite and showed respect for each other, staff and visitors. They were interested in their learning and tried hard to complete their work to the best of their ability. The introduction of your 'text-led curriculum', seen through 'turrets and tiaras', has ensured that learning activities stimulate pupils' interest and that they are challenged to fulfil their potential. You have taken advantage of the opportunities available through the wider Windmill Federation and, as a result, your Year 6 pupils feel prepared for transition to secondary school.

Teachers value the training that you provide because it helps them to make the

changes needed to fulfil the school's improvement plans. This was evident in the mathematics lessons we observed.

Working closely with your governors, you have implemented a clear plan for continuing to improve the school, which you review regularly. You identify priorities through accurate evaluation. Governors ensure that information about standards and progress is analysed and decisions are based on clear evidence and priorities. They make regular visits to the school, although these could be developed further to focus on the impact of the changes you and other leaders are making.

Leaders rightly focus on ensuring that leaders and teachers do more to improve the challenge for the most able pupils and improve the consistency of effective teaching across the school. Outcomes for the most able pupils are improving.

Your school is a friendly, family-orientated school. You reflect well on feedback from external consultants and the Windmill Federation and, as a result, attainment is similar to that seen nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have helped to establish a strong safeguarding culture. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school. Staff receive regular training and are knowledgeable about local priorities and initiatives. As a result, they understand their role well in keeping pupils safe at school.

The designated safeguarding leads ensure that any concerns are acted on quickly. They maintain effective working links with the local authority, other agencies and community teams when more help is needed for vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff know how to report concerns, using the recently introduced online management system. This has further improved the school's ability to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Your family support team plays a significant role here.

The pupils I spoke with informally say that they feel safe and that there is very little bullying. They are confident that staff would listen to them if they had concerns. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online, and displays around the school remind everyone how to stay safe when using the internet.

Parents are positive about the school. Nearly all parents agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for, with some choosing to express how much staff do in 'going above and beyond'.

Governors regularly check the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry we agreed upon was to explore whether leaders and teachers have ensured that pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in reading, including phonics. This is because in both 2016 and 2017, too few pupils achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check.
- Leaders and teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' reading abilities both on entry to the school and at the end of Reception Year. This information is used to plan learning activities to improve reading and the use of phonics. Both teaching and support staff have attended external training, which has ensured a greater choice of books, a literacy focus within activities both indoors and outdoors, and improved pronunciation and questioning in both early years and Year 1. However, learning observations and discussions with leaders indicate that some pupils are entering key stage 2 with weak reading skills. Leaders need to take a more strategic approach to teaching reading across early years and key stage 1.
- My second line of enquiry focused on establishing how far leaders and teachers have ensured that pupils at key stage 2 make strong progress in mathematics. This is because in 2016 and 2017, overall, pupils' progress at key stage 2 was low in the national tests and their attainment was below the national average. Leaders' own evaluation indicated that pupils lacked resilience and were reluctant to engage in challenging mathematical activities.
- Leaders have reflected on the school's approach to how mathematics is taught and have taken actions to improve it. As a result of carefully planned professional development, modelling teaching, observing lessons, work scrutiny and planning scrutiny, teachers are more confident when teaching pupils to apply their mathematical skills to questions involving problem solving. Teachers have also effectively introduced reasoning as a key element in each mathematics lesson.
- Pupils' books demonstrate that these ways of working are now firmly embedded throughout the school, and that teachers are alert to pupils' misconceptions. These are tackled quickly, so that pupils move forward in their learning. Teachers are moving the most able pupils forward quickly, without this limiting the depth of their mathematical understanding.
- We observed, together, some mathematics lessons across the school where pupils showed great perseverance in problem solving and where they challenged themselves to do better. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics and like being challenged. Your recent pupil feedback survey collated a number of pupil responses that were echoed during the inspection. For example, a pupil said, 'I don't just do mathematics in my head now – I have to explain how I worked it out'. Another pupil said, 'I love mathematics because it helps my future. It will help me get a good job and I like that we get challenged.'
- Teachers' use of assessment is often not precise enough in mathematics to identify what pupils need to do next in order to deepen their knowledge or refine a skill. This limits teachers' ability to plan activities that will help pupils to take their next steps in their learning. We discussed the fact that this may be an area for development in other subjects too.
- My third line of enquiry involved exploring how far leaders' and teachers' work is

enabling pupils to make strong progress across the wider curriculum. This is because at the time of the last inspection, leaders were advised to improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum in order to strengthen pupils' progress further.

- You have reviewed your current curriculum, as you knew it was not stimulating and engaging pupils well enough. You have worked with your teachers to plan a 'text-led curriculum' for September 2018. This has been successfully trialled during this year. You have introduced this planned change effectively, ensuring that teachers have a clear understanding of the curriculum's aims and objectives. This well-planned curriculum is interesting and engaging.
- Our joint review of your 'wider curriculum' books showed us that the quality of work across the curriculum was weaker within science, history and geography compared with English and mathematics.
- Finally, we looked at the work of leaders in improving attendance, in particular for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.
- You have worked hard with pupils and your attendance lead to improve pupils' rates of attendance. You have a range of strategies in place to both support and challenge families. Your 'smarty pants' attendance reward system is well understood by pupils and they enjoy receiving their certificates in assembly. As a result of your diligence, some pupils have increased their attendance each half term. However, despite these approaches, absence remains high for a small proportion of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers make better use of assessments in mathematics to identify what pupils need to learn next, so that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, make strong progress
- improvements in the teaching of phonics are sustained so that all pupils are better prepared to tackle the demands of the key stage 2 curriculum
- the implementation of the 'text-led curriculum' is regularly reviewed, ensuring that all pupils make strong progress across the wider curriculum
- attendance improves by continuing to embed the strategies that have brought about improvements, including challenging and supporting parents and carers to make sure that their children are in school more often.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sally Garrett

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you and other leaders about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection. I considered leaders' evaluation of the quality of education, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' learning. I met with other leaders, teachers, your school improvement partner and your chair of governors. Documents such as the school's improvement plan, leaders' monitoring and analysis of the progress pupils make, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's safeguarding arrangements, records, files and documentation were examined. I observed pupils learning and looked at examples of pupils' work to explore the progress they are making over time. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons regarding their learning and heard four Year 2 pupils read. I considered the views of 10 parents who had responded to Parent View and those of the nine parents who had left comments on the Parent View free-text service. I also took account of the views of parents who had responded to the school's own survey. The views of 13 staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 43 pupils who completed Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were also taken into account.