

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 September 2018

Mrs Georgina Anelay
Headteacher
Normanton-on-Soar Primary School
Main Street
Normanton-on-Soar
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE12 5HB

Dear Mrs Anelay

Short inspection of Normanton-on-Soar Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 October 2013.

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 you joined the school two years ago you have worked with governors to identify the key priorities for the school to bring about further improvements. Governors are very aware of the benefits of working closely with other schools. You have developed effective relationships with schools in the area, including through the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance. The small school site is well managed. Communal and outdoor spaces are used effectively. Vibrant displays of pupils' work reflect the high expectations you place on both staff and pupils.

Together with governors you have sharply evaluated the key strengths and areas for development of the school. You have a relentless focus on ensuring the high quality of teaching and learning, which contributes to pupils' strong progress. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was in the top 20% of schools nationally for the last three years. High levels of scrutiny and accountability in key stage 1 have contributed to a marked improvement in the progress and attainment of pupils in the current academic year. The most recent performance information for 2018 demonstrates that children make strong progress

in the early years. All pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 this year.

Since the last inspection you have put into place a thorough system for checking both the quality of teaching and how well pupils are learning. This has helped to establish consistently high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school. The information you collect is analysed to check that the teaching is having an impact on pupils' progress. Teachers lead training for their colleagues to share their expertise and this creates a sense of collective responsibility for leading the school forward. Subject leaders are planning to make improvements in key areas including mathematics, English and in the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, plans designed to share good practice more broadly across the school are not always sufficiently focused.

Pupils benefit from teachers' cross-curricular planning of a range of creative and relevant topics, including ancient Greece and the characteristics of the universe. Key subject-specific skills are developed within projects, which are richly enjoyed by the whole school community. Pupils' progress is assessed at regular intervals and, where necessary, additional teaching is carefully planned and delivered by the whole team. The effective deployment of well-trained teaching assistants ensures that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are closely supported and their progress monitored.

The school provides a safe and welcoming environment and promotes very effectively the principles of inclusion and diversity. For example, the assembly programme explores a range of issues sensitively, while anti-bullying messages are communicated very clearly around school. Expectations for pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes are made clear both in the school's values and in the well-developed behaviour policy. Pupils appreciate and enjoy the family ethos of their small school. They value highly the support provided by every member of the school staff and the range of opportunities open to them. Their conduct is exemplary.

Leaders have implemented an effective system to monitor attendance. Incidents of absence are followed up by school staff and in communication with local authority officers. Attendance of pupils at the school is above the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have developed an effective culture for safeguarding pupils at the school. The child protection policy is comprehensive and includes reference to the latest guidance on issues of public concern. Staff receive appropriate training at frequent intervals and are clear about their statutory responsibilities for keeping children safe. Training includes specific reference to the importance of vigilance for signs of abuse, as well as identification of the threats posed by extremism.

Where pupils require higher levels of support from external agencies, leaders tenaciously pursue the progress of agreed actions. The single central record is comprehensive, compliant and securely maintained and safer recruitment practice is

robust. The governing body includes a governor with experience of safeguarding who conducts regular visits to the school and closely scrutinises the quality of record-keeping. Where necessary, the school uses support from specialist professionals, including educational psychologists and counsellors.

Inspection findings

- In response to the findings of the previous inspection, leaders have placed significant emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum. The school community has responded enthusiastically to a 'golden thread' for writing, with a weekly celebration of pupils' writing at length and in depth. The English leader has developed a well-focused action plan for improving pupils' skills and resilience in writing. Teachers' confidence in identifying opportunities for pupils to write at various points during the school day has grown. Pupils confidently use a range of tools to support their writing including word banks, dictionaries and thesauruses. Pupils also value the focus on editing and refining their work.
- The school has made significant investment in the development of high-quality resources to encourage pupils to read. A well-stocked and thoughtfully designed school library has been developed at the heart of the school site. In every classroom, staff have developed attractive working walls for English and mathematics which are regularly used by pupils. Pupils also enjoy dedicated whole-school 'reading for pleasure' time, embracing the opportunity to read with pupils from other year groups.
- The teaching of phonics is of high quality. In the early years, children make strong progress in early reading and writing. A dedicated phonics teaching area is well supported with a range of visual and digital resources. Well-planned additional teaching of phonics also ensures that pupils who fall behind catch up quickly.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are often more advanced than those typically found in children of this age. However, too few children than is currently the case nationally exceed the expected standard and reach a greater depth of understanding. The school development plan is precisely focused on ensuring that pupils, including children in the early years, are stretched and challenged. In mathematics this is being achieved through a focus on the specific steps in the 'learning journey'. Where pupils and children have frequent opportunities to resolve misconceptions and share their best work, they make strong progress.
- The work of the special educational needs coordinator to improve the school's provision for a relatively high proportion of pupils with dyslexia is enabling teachers to meet these pupils' needs more closely. Collaboration with professionals drawn from across local schools is also helping to provide training and support. However, the alignment between the school development plan and the specific plan for promoting the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not currently close enough.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils working at greater depth by the end of both key stages increases rapidly
- specific plans designed to continue the improvement of the school in key areas align more closely with broader school priorities and actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Hollis-Brown
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with the subject leaders for English and mathematics, representatives of the governing body, and the special educational needs coordinator. I considered the 13 responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with some free-text comments, and met with parents at the start of the school day. Together with you, I visited classes in both key stages and considered pupils' work in books. I observed pupils' behaviour and met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of the school. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, their plans for further improvement and information on pupils' current progress. I considered a number of policy documents and records, including those related to safeguarding. I also considered recruitment checks to confirm the robustness of practice in this area.