

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 October 2018

Mr David Owen
Headteacher
Allonby Primary School
Moss Lane
Allonby
Maryport
Cumbria
CA15 6QG

Dear Mr Owen

Short inspection of Allonby Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 March 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 the staff have created a caring and nurturing school. Within the small and close-knit school community, there is an overarching ethos of kindness, consideration and compassion. Pupils appreciate the help they receive from their teachers. Staff are quick to establish positive and supportive relationships with pupils. As a result, all pupils, but particularly those who are new to the school, settle in very quickly and make good progress.

You and the staff are always looking to broaden further pupils' experiences. To this end, you have fostered strong links within the local community. Many parents and carers, and governors, are happy to devote their time to the school. As a result, there is a variety of extra-curricular activities for pupils to enjoy. For example, pupils explained to me how, after school, they enjoy learning about gardening and photography. Pupils feel valued, listened to and treated as individuals. For instance, they explained to me how you are open to their ideas for other extra-curricular activities. Pupils also appreciate the leadership opportunities that school offers them. For example, they are keen to be 'eco-representatives'. They are quick to encourage their peers and adults in the school to do small things to improve the environment.

Parents are highly complimentary about the school. They consider staff to be approachable and caring. Parents are highly supportive of leaders and they would recommend the school to another parent.

The members of the governing body bring to their roles a range of highly relevant skills, knowledge and expertise. They have an accurate view of the school and they ask pertinent questions of leaders. For example, they challenge leaders regularly about pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have an accurate and comprehensive view of the school and you are proactive in securing further developments. This ensures that the quality of teaching across the school is going from strength to strength.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to improve further pupils' progress by allowing pupils to move on in their learning. Over recent years, you have taken effective action to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments. For example, you work with other local schools to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. This means that teachers plan learning that meets pupils' needs. You have also put in place effective systems to check on the quality of teaching. You ensure that staff check on pupils' learning as a matter of routine. As a result, teachers challenge pupils to move on in their learning as soon as they are ready. Work in pupils' books at key stages 1 and 2 shows that this is especially the case in English and mathematics. Teachers set challenging work for pupils that allows them to build effectively on what they have already learned. For example, key stage 1 pupils benefit from increasingly complex questions in mathematics in order to develop further their calculation skills. Nonetheless, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in history and geography.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They are confident they can speak with an adult in school if they are worried about anything.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils show a strong understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. They understand that they must speak with an adult they trust if they see something they are unsure about online. Pupils also learn about the possible dangers of water, through sessions from external speakers. You also ensure that pupils learn how to look after their emotional health. For example, pupils were keen to explain to me about the importance of knowing how to relax.

There are systems to check that adults at the school are safe to work with children. Staff and governors receive appropriate safeguarding training. They understand the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Records of leaders' work with external agencies are meticulous.

Inspection findings

- I was interested to know about pupils' rates of absence. This is because, in 2017, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school increased. You have put several strategies in place to ensure that pupils attend school every day. For example, you have worked to ensure that pupils and their families understand the importance of good attendance. Pupils receive rewards for good attendance and they value their points and certificates.
- You have also improved communications with parents about their children's attendance. As a result, some pupils' attendance has improved considerably. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has decreased.
- I was also interested to learn about whether pupils benefit from a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy a curriculum that is rich and personalised. This is because you check regularly that pupils' needs are met and adapt the curriculum appropriately. Pupils' learning in class is enriched with a multitude of trips, both within the local area and beyond. For example, key stage 2 pupils enjoy visits to different places of worship, such as a mosque and a Buddhist temple. Key stage 1 pupils enjoy visits closer to home through the 'people who help us' topic. For instance, they have recently visited a police station, a fire station and a dental surgery.
- You have a strong rationale for the curriculum. You aim to provide pupils with a wide variety of experiences and prepare them well for secondary school. Through links with a school in a different part of the country, pupils experience a taste of multicultural Britain. They learn about mutual respect and tolerance for those pupils who have different colour skin or faith and those pupils who have a different type of family.
- You have worked to ensure that pupils can develop and apply their skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows pupils have many opportunities to develop their subject-specific skills in science. For example, key stage 2 pupils make predictions and draw conclusions following a series of test results.
- There are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their subject-specific skills in history and geography. For example, the history curriculum allows pupils to broaden their knowledge through a variety of topics. Pupils enjoy learning about the Second World War and ancient civilisations. However, work in pupils' books shows that teachers provide limited tasks for pupils which would enable them to develop as enquiring historians. For instance, there are limited opportunities for pupils to decide why some historical sources are more reliable than others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan learning that provides pupils with more opportunities to develop and apply their subject-specific skills in history and geography.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Gregory
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I spoke formally with a group of pupils and informally with pupils at social times. I spoke informally with some parents. Leaders accompanied me on visits to classes where I observed learning across the school. I looked at pupils' work in writing, mathematics, science and the wider curriculum. I spoke with the school adviser from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.

I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, and leaders' attendance information. I considered the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation. I also checked on the contents of the school's website. I considered six responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I also considered three responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.