

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Kirstine Boon
Headteacher
Swingate Primary School
Sultan Road
Lordswood
Chatham
Kent
ME5 8TJ

Dear Ms Boon

Short inspection of Swingate Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 2018 with Peter Wibroe, Ofsted Inspector, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders work together effectively to ensure that the school's values lie at the heart of all that the school does. The school motto of 'Believe, learn, achieve' is reflected in the actions of all the pupils and staff of Swingate Primary School. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the education and care that their children receive. One parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'I feel very proud of the school and privileged that our children not only attend but flourish there.'

Leaders have created a culture in school that is focused on the needs of all pupils. The pastoral care that pupils receive is of a high standard and contributes to the excellent attitudes and behaviour they all demonstrate. Pupils speak highly of the 'Zebra Zone', where they can go if they need someone to talk to or have any worries. The work the school does to involve pupils in decision making contributes effectively to their development as responsible and caring individuals. One pupil explained that Swingate was 'democratic because we vote on things'. This includes involving pupils in decisions about which charities to support and has resulted in the school raising significant sums for worthy causes over the years.

Governors are effective in providing an appropriate level of challenge and support. They receive valuable information about the performance of the school, and systems are well established to allow them to evaluate the accuracy of information they receive. Governors regularly visit the school and have clearly defined roles that are

linked to key areas of focus. 'Challenge meetings' are held frequently that allow governors and leaders to have meaningful discussions around the actions and impact of leaders. An example of this was on a recent visit to the early years, where governors were able to see first-hand the work of leaders to provide a great start for children and pupils at Swingate. Governors are able to accurately evaluate the impact that they have as a result of effective training. They are aware that their scrutiny of the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils can be improved.

The previous inspection report recommended that teaching was refined in order to improve standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 and that middle leaders were developed further. Leaders have worked effectively to develop the Swingate approach to teaching and learning and this has resulted in improvements to the rates of progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2018. You rightly judge the quality of teaching as good, with some elements that are particularly strong. You accurately identify aspects that can be improved further and improvement plans capture the appropriate next steps for the school. Middle leaders are able to describe their role in supporting the improvements in teaching and can evaluate the impact they have had.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates all that it does. All training in child protection and safeguarding is up to date. The procedures for vetting the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children are rigorous. Governors provide effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures, and receive thorough training themselves.

Pupils are unanimous in their view that the school keeps them safe and teaches them how to stay safe. They can describe in detail how to stay safe online and why keeping personal information confidential is important. They are aware of how to stay safe outside school and who to approach should they have a problem.

A particular strength of the school's work to keep pupils safe is in the way that it teaches pupils to understand about friendships and falling out. Consequently, pupils learn to recognise the different aspects of friendship and how bullying can occur. Pupils are taught to recognise people's right to be different and the importance of equality within society.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at specific areas of the school's work, including: how effectively leaders use additional funding to support the progress of all disadvantaged pupils; how effectively leaders have improved the quality of teaching in key stage 2; and the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in 2018 at the end of key stage 2 improved

significantly compared to previous years. Teachers have high expectations of disadvantaged pupils and work hard to overcome barriers to learning. Individual 'pupil premium plans' are in place for every disadvantaged child. These plans are leading to increasing rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils where support is carefully targeted. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 class, where a group of disadvantaged pupils were being challenged to use the ambitious vocabulary they had learned in their writing. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils have benefited from 'catch-up' groups that help address misconceptions that pupils have. Leaders recognise that better use of information about the impact of funding will allow them to spend in precisely the right areas.

- The quality of teaching in key stage 2 has improved as a result of actions that leaders have taken since the previous inspection. Sequences of learning are planned well so that pupils' skills and knowledge develop appropriately. Leaders have taken effective action in determining the school's overall approach to teaching and learning. An example of this is the 'Swingate love of reading' approach to teaching reading that has been developed through the school's own research into what helps pupils learn best.
- In mathematics, leaders have focused on ensuring that pupils have access to physical resources to help them understand mathematical concepts. They have also rewritten the school's approach to the calculation methods that pupils are taught as they progress through the school. Helpful videos of these approaches are available to parents on the school's website so that pupils can be supported at home.
- Leaders have ensured that learning is at the heart of what happens in classrooms through a range of strategies. The 'golden chair', 'learning lemur' and badges are awarded to pupils who show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils report that they learn well and make good progress. One pupil explained that 'We have pupil conferencing, where teachers sit down with us and agree our goals for the term.'
- Leaders have ensured that actions taken to improve teaching and learning are established consistently across the school. They have achieved this by developing the way that they monitor the effectiveness of teaching. An open door policy operates within the school, and teachers welcome visits from senior leaders who support and challenge them to develop their skills and consistently follow school policy.
- The curriculum is a real strength of Swingate Primary School. Leaders and teachers have gone to great lengths to ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with exciting, engaging and meaningful learning opportunities. Wherever possible, learning in different subjects is brought together so that pupils can make connections between what they are taught in different subjects.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is genuinely broad, balanced and enriched. 'Entry days' to new topics are planned not only to excite and motivate pupils but also to give teachers the opportunity to assess what pupils already know about their new topics. In Year 1, pupils who were in the middle of their 'ice, ice baby' topic had already visited an ice skating rink for an ice skating lesson. They were observed matching words such as 'glacier' and 'mountain' to images in a lesson combining elements of the geography and English curriculum. In Year 6, pupils were highly engaged in their 'Shackleton' topic. Pupils were able to act out scenes

from Shackleton's story and could empathise with decisions that he took.

- Standards across the curriculum are high in all subjects. Artwork produced by Year 6 pupils demonstrated clear progression in the skills that they had been taught throughout their time in the school, and their standard of painting is high.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve so that it is outstanding overall, enabling all pupils to make consistently rapid progress
- the strategy for the use of additional funding is refined so that leaders and governors can evaluate its impact more effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

James Freeston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, senior leaders and governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority. We visited lessons across the school, with a particular focus on key stage 2, to observe teaching, speak with pupils and look at their books. We spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. We met with middle leaders to discuss their roles and actions in school. We analysed the 169 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, and the 53 responses to the staff survey. We examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documentation relating to safeguarding and the pupil premium strategy.