

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



7 December 2018

Mrs Sarah O'Boyle  
Headteacher  
Galton Valley Primary School  
Brasshouse Lane  
Smethwick  
West Midlands  
B66 1BA

Dear Mrs O'Boyle

### **Short inspection of Galton Valley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 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. 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.

Leadership is a key strength of the school. You and other leaders demonstrate an unflinching commitment to providing the best education for each individual child. You have very high expectations. Leaders have a very well-developed understanding of the school's performance. You have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need further development. You and other senior leaders are highly reflective and constantly seek ways to improve the learning journey of every child. Careful thought is given to the impact on pupils. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that pupils benefit from the actions taken.

Governors are totally committed and have a range of expertise. They are very proud of the school, the team spirit and all that has been achieved. They have a clear sense of purpose and an excellent understanding of the local community. They hold the school to account for providing the very best for its pupils and they ask challenging questions. Governors regularly visit lessons, meet with staff and talk to pupils.

You have created a happy, harmonious school where respect and tolerance are deeply embedded in the school's ethos. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of all the school does to help their children. Nearly all the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to other parents. One parent echoed the view of many when she said: 'My child gets excellent teaching at this school and is happy there.'

Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the key issues raised at the previous inspection. At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that the most able pupils are always given suitably challenging work in mathematics. You have addressed this by ensuring that teaching requires pupils to not only apply skills but reason, explain and justify. As a result, more pupils are reaching the higher standard in mathematics at key stage 2. You were also asked to ensure that pupils have a quick recall of number facts and have opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in different contexts. You have introduced a whole-school approach to mathematics that includes opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their number skills. As a result, outcomes have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is an extremely strong safeguarding culture across the whole school. Pupils' safety and well-being are the first priority of all the adults who work in the school. Every incident is logged quickly, considered carefully and followed through meticulously. The school is rigorous in communications with the local authority so as to ensure that pupils are being protected.

Staff know their pupils and families well and act swiftly to provide support as and when it is needed. Leaders have an excellent understanding of the issues facing the community. The school works productively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need quickly. The contribution of the family support workers is highly effective.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that it is a safe place, where poor behaviour and bullying are rare. One pupil told me, 'We do not do that sort of thing at Galton Valley. We are a very happy school.' Pupils have confidence in the staff to resolve any worries they may have. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, particularly when they are using the internet. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high levels of attendance.

### **Inspection findings**

- The leadership team focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and monitor this regularly. Leaders and staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The quality of teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection. High-quality training and professional development have ensured that there is an agreed approach to teaching and learning, which is delivered

consistently across the school. An example of this is in the consistency of approaches to the teaching of mathematics and reading that is clearly evident. The high expectations of pride and presentation are consistently adhered to across the school. Teachers deliver well-structured and well-paced lessons that are a balance between consolidating and deepening pupils' understanding. Leaders recognise a key area of focus is on ways of helping those children who join the school with skills well below those typically expected to develop and improve their skills as quickly as possible.

- One line of enquiry focused on the teaching of mathematics. The progress pupils make at the end of key stage 2 has been well above the national average for the last three years. The consistent approach to school improvement has been instrumental in improving outcomes in mathematics. The development of mathematical skills and understanding has been a focus for development since the last inspection. The subject leader is highly influential in leading this work. Regular opportunities to practise basic skills enable pupils to quickly secure their knowledge of number facts. There is a range of evidence in books and during lessons of pupils using problem solving and reasoning skills to explain their answers and deepen their thinking. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were discussing and comparing fractions with confidence.
- My next line of enquiry focused on the teaching of reading across the school. In 2018 at the end of key stage 2, pupils made average progress, but it was not as strong as in mathematics and reading, especially for the most able boys. You place a high priority on reading. The two English coordinators are very knowledgeable and lead the subject effectively. As a result, pupils in the school achieve very well in reading. The coordinators have ensured that there is a consistent whole-school approach to reading. This was evident during the inspection. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of phonics for the younger pupils. This was seen in a Reception session, when children enthusiastically applied their knowledge of phonics to read and write new words.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are given plentiful opportunities to read in school. This includes using their reading skills across a range of curriculum subjects. For example, in Year 5, pupils used their skills when studying 'Black History Month'. Pupils use intonation and expression well to convey meaning. Pupils work out the meanings of unfamiliar words by using clues from the sentence or paragraph in which they occur. Pupils read a range of books, including fiction and non-fiction. Reading records show that pupils are reading regularly. Leaders are continuing to focus on the reading of the most able boys to ensure that their outcomes are as high as that of the girls.
- The school provides a happy learning environment for its pupils. All parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are well looked after and safe. Pupils have well-developed learning behaviours because these are modelled and encouraged by all staff. Behaviour is excellent and manners are exemplary. Pupils cooperate well and support one another in lessons. They are proud of their school and have a clear sense of belonging.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children who enter the school with skills and knowledge well below typically expected lose no time on building on their knowledge, skills and understanding when they first join school
- they build on improvements already made so that the most able boys achieve as well as girls in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Somers  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of the governing body. I observed pupils' learning in lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and heard several pupils read. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during lessons and at playtime. I scrutinised documents including the school's development plan, the school's own evaluation of its performance and records of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of the 33 responses to Parent View. I also spoke to parents at the end of the school day. I considered the 53 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.