

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 December 2018

Mrs Amanda Thompson
Headteacher
Paddocks Primary School
Rochfort Avenue
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 0DL

Dear Mrs Thompson

Short inspection of Paddocks Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since then, from acting headteacher, you have been appointed to the permanent role. A new deputy headteacher has been in post for two years. The previous inspection highlighted many strengths in the quality of education that the school provides. Working together, all staff have built on these strengths and created shared expectations of high standards for pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour.

The leadership team has valued the support provided by the local authority in growing leadership capacity. Governors have also benefited from this support, which has helped them to provide an increasing level of challenge to school leaders. A planned programme of governor visits aims to further enhance their work. Self-evaluation makes it clear that leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further improvement.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. The school sits in a large, wooded location on a hillside and pupils move confidently and sensibly around the many separate areas of the site. They concentrate in their lessons and want to do well. Pupils told me that the work set is 'sometimes quite hard but the teachers push you to do well in this'. When there is any occasional disruption to learning, pupils were clear that teachers sort out problems quickly.

Paddocks Primary School is well regarded by parents. They value the extra support that their children receive when needed. Parents feel that their children are doing well at school and that their teachers deal with any concerns appropriately.

The school has strong links with the local horse-racing community and pupils benefit from this, for example, through regular visits to a local horse breeder that are linked to the science curriculum, and sessions run by a local equine artist in school. Leaders have worked with the staff to develop the curriculum since the last inspection, adapting methods of teaching mathematics, reading, writing and phonics to better develop pupils' skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a clear understanding shared by all staff of how to keep pupils safe. Following training and regular updates, they can demonstrate that they understand recent changes to keeping children safe in education and how to recognise the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk.

Senior leaders ensure that all concerns about pupils are dealt with appropriately and in a timely way. They make sure that families can access the support they need and follow up with the local authority services where needed.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They said that there is no bullying now and where it has happened in the past, staff have dealt with it quickly.

Leaders have ensured that the required safeguarding checks on employees are carried out effectively. On the day of the inspection, it was noted that some checks had not been recorded correctly. However, these were rectified quickly during the inspection. Even so, the systems for recording information are not well organised so that they are consistently clear to all who access them.

Inspection findings

- I identified some lines of enquiry to check whether the school remains good and agreed these with you at the start of the inspection. Firstly, I considered whether the provision for disadvantaged pupils was effective and enabling those pupils to make as much progress as non-disadvantaged pupils. Published data from 2018 shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was below that of non-disadvantaged pupils in reading. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was also below that of non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Since the last inspection, this has been an improvement focus for the school. Teachers use a 'disadvantaged first' approach. This means that they prioritise the needs of the disadvantaged pupils when planning interventions or activities to meet different learning needs.
- The small number of pupils who are disadvantaged means that this does not have a negative impact on planning for the rest of the class group. In year

groups where there are larger groups of disadvantaged pupils, you have used the additional funding to provide extra teaching time and appropriate interventions.

- The support provided for pupils is carefully monitored by your senior leaders to check that interventions are working. The deputy headteacher has recently introduced a case study approach to tracking the effectiveness of additional support offered to disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has helped to improve leaders' understanding of which support has made a difference, but the information has not yet been used by teachers.
- In-school teacher assessments indicate that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than previously. This work has not yet had time to make a significant increase in pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2, but there is no noticeable difference between the work of the disadvantaged pupils and that of the rest of the cohort.
- My next line of enquiry was to see how well the most able pupils are challenged and supported to reach their full potential. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure at the end of key stage 2 has risen. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard remains below the national average. Currently, not enough pupils who exceed the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 reach the same standard at the end of key stage 2.
- We looked at a wide range of pupils' books throughout the day. In English, leaders have introduced a clear system of stepped success criteria that is used consistently through the school. The pupils I spoke with understood this and I saw them attempting to include all criteria in their work. I also noted that the most able pupils responded to the 'deeper learning' questions in their reading comprehensions. Pupils use teachers' feedback effectively, in line with the school's policy, to help them to improve their own work.
- The school has adopted a mathematics scheme that aims for all pupils to be able to access the same learning goals, with extra support for pupils who need additional help. In lessons, the focus seen on developing fluency in calculations led to suitable 'challenges' encouraging mathematical reasoning and problem solving. The most able pupils told me that these made them think.
- You explained that this level of challenge was not always consistent across the school in the past. The current work in pupils' books shows that pupils across the year groups are now being adequately challenged. However, this has not yet had an impact on attainment at the end of each key stage.
- Following the previous inspection report, pupils' standard of grammar, punctuation and spelling was identified as not always as secure as it might be. In dealing with these concerns, leaders introduced separate grammar sessions quickly. The improvements could be seen in pupils' work during this inspection, which was generally well punctuated and made use of appropriate grammar.
- In work scrutinies, we noted that the standard of handwriting and presentation is varied in some year groups. Where teacher expectations are higher, the standard is higher. The leadership team has addressed this by changing the approach to

teaching handwriting in the lower part of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure:

- better provision for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in reading, so that they make strong progress, and leaders continue checks to identify the most effective strategies
- that higher attaining pupils make consistently good progress, raising the proportion who reach the higher standard at end of key stage 2
- that the administration and organisation of systems for recording pre-employment checks improve, so that all information is retained in a consistent form.

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

Yours sincerely

Tessa Holledge
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's own evaluation of its performance, progress since the last inspection and information about current provision in the school. We discussed procedures for safeguarding, examined case studies of referrals made and I examined the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.

I spoke with parents on the playground. I considered the 21 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the total of 45 responses made in this academic year.

We visited every classroom at least once and saw intervention groups in action. We looked at a wide range of pupils' work, in class and out of class, and across subjects and abilities. I met with the deputy headteacher and phase leaders and also spoke to other staff during the school day. I met with a group of pupils formally and spoke to pupils in class and outside on the playground at lunchtime. I also met with the local authority senior standards and excellence officer and representatives of the governing body.