

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 February 2019

Mr Adrian Antell
Headteacher
Farnborough Road Junior School
Farnborough Road
Birkdale
Southport
Merseyside
PR8 3DF

Dear Mr Antell

Short inspection of Farnborough Road Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your unwavering commitment to the community and high aspirations for pupils are shared by staff and governors. You and your leaders are thoughtful in the decisions you make in your drive for continued improvement. You and your staff have created a happy school where teachers love teaching and pupils love learning, embodying the school motto: 'belonging together, learning together, achieving together'.

The majority of parents would recommend the school to others. Parents who spoke to me, and those who accessed Ofsted's online questionnaire, commented very positively about the many opportunities provided for their children. Parents particularly appreciate the close links you have with the infant school. They say this helps children get off to a smooth start at the school. Many parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) appreciate the care and support that their children receive from staff. The views of parents are typically reflected in the comment, 'This is a great school and my children love coming every day.' Inspection evidence supported these views.

Pupils are polite, articulate and well mannered. They conduct themselves well around school and take their responsibilities very seriously, for example as peer mediators, play leaders and members of committees. Pupils feel valued and listened to. They speak confidently that should they have any worries, there will be someone they can talk with. Pupils who spoke to me said, 'You can zip your worries in the

worry monster's mouth and know that a teacher will take the time to talk to you about it.' Pupils said that teachers make learning fun. They talk enthusiastically about their 'pen pals' in a school in Ghana and the fundraising activities that have enabled them to help purchase resources and equipment for the school. They appreciate the wide range of clubs they can attend, including mini singers, cookery, football for girls and boys, and recorder club. Older pupils are looking forward to the residential trip when they will have the opportunity to challenge themselves further.

Leaders have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to support pupils' progress effectively. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, within a culture where professional discussion is encouraged. Staff appreciate opportunities to work with other colleagues and share expertise. This has been particularly successful with the changes you have made to the way that you teach mathematics. Teachers plan learning activities in mathematics and other curriculum subjects which accurately match the needs and interests of pupils, particularly the most able. You are developing a curriculum that enables pupils to make links in their learning and builds on their prior knowledge.

Teachers use a range of assessment activities to accurately identify the precise gaps in pupils' learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils are given the help that they need to catch up quickly, especially with their reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Robust systems are in place to check that all adults who are involved in the life of the school are safe to work with children. The site is kept safe for pupils and adults, particularly in extreme weather conditions. Safeguarding arrangements are understood by staff because of the high-quality training they receive. All records are securely kept. Leaders work very effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive appropriate guidance and support.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a variety of different activities, including visitors from national charities. Older pupils are proactive in sharing e-safety information through posters and displays. They know how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They speak confidently about how teachers deal quickly and effectively with any incidents of bullying and help pupils to make the right choices about how they behave towards others.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked at several key lines of enquiry. The first was about the actions you have taken to support disadvantaged pupils, particularly with their reading. Leaders and staff work well with the infant school which the majority of pupils attend before they start at Farnborough Road Junior School. As

a result, pupils settle quickly into Year 3. Leaders accurately identify the barriers to learning for individual pupils and their families. You work effectively with a number of outside agencies and charities to ensure that they get the help and guidance they need practically, socially and emotionally.

- Recent changes to the way assessment information is used have enabled leaders to identify the precise gaps in learning for disadvantaged pupils. The progress pupils make is shared with parents. Staff share ideas with parents about how they can help their children further at home. Staff use questions very effectively because of the high-quality training they receive. They encourage pupils to summarise what they have read, explain the meaning of new vocabulary and understand inference with the text. Pupils use their phonic knowledge with increasing accuracy in their reading. A love of reading is fostered well throughout school. Pupils particularly look forward to Friday afternoons, when you select a class from the sorting hat and then visit their classroom to read the next chapters in their class novel. Pupils benefit positively from the opportunity to read with adults in school several times a week. As a result of these strategies, the progress disadvantaged pupils make with their reading is improving.
- Next, we looked at how you support the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders use their good subject knowledge to ensure that staff have the skills and understanding they need to support pupils well. The leader for SEND works effectively with the leader for SEND in the infant school. Consequently, information is shared, and the individualised support for pupils is maintained as they join Year 3. Parents spoke highly of the smooth transition into key stage 2 and how quickly their child had settled, thanks to the positive relationships fostered by staff. Leaders use assessment information effectively to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Support staff are deployed well. They use questions effectively to encourage pupils to refine and develop their explanations, particularly when solving problems in mathematics.
- Leaders have identified an increasing proportion of pupils who have been identified with social, emotional and mental health needs. You work effectively with a number of agencies and professionals, including the mental health nurse, to provide support for pupils. Training enables staff to respond effectively to pupils' needs and anxieties. Pupils talk confidently about the rainbow room, a dedicated safe place where there is always someone to talk with. The range of sporting opportunities you provide compliments the work you do to support pupils' physical health effectively. Leaders use imaginative ways to promote healthy eating, for example a 'come dine with me' opportunity for parents at lunchtime was well attended. Detailed information gathered from a range of sources shows that pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Finally, we discussed the changes you have made to the way mathematics is taught. Leaders reviewed how mathematics was taught in the infant school to be able to ensure that teachers planned learning activities that built upon what pupils already know. Staff work together to share ideas and expertise with other colleagues. Leaders check that actions to improve the teaching of mathematics are consistently applied across the school. Staff use questions effectively to encourage pupils to refine and expand their explanations. Pupils enjoy

mathematics. They talk confidently about the knowledge they need to solve challenging mathematical problems. Pupils who spoke to me said that learning their tables by practising with the online app at home helps them with their work in school. Teachers use assessment information well in lessons to quickly identify pupils who are struggling. As a result, they are able to give them the help they need to catch up quickly. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Leaders are developing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in other curriculum subjects so that pupils can deepen their subject knowledge further and make links in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they continue to:

- develop a curriculum which provides pupils with the opportunity to deepen their subject knowledge in other curriculum subjects further through making links in their learning and building on what they already know
- build on the improvements made in how reading is taught, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that they have the opportunity to reach the potential of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also spoke with members of the board of governors. I visited classrooms with you, where I had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. I considered a range of evidence and I met with a group of pupils formally during the day. I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day and I took into account 21 responses to the staff questionnaire and 29 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I also considered 42 free-text comments and the 67 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding procedures and practices.