

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



7 February 2019

Mr Duncan Thompson  
Headteacher  
Shawlands Primary School  
Shaw Street  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire  
S70 6JL

Dear Mr Thompson

### **Short inspection of Shawlands Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 January 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Shawlands Primary School is a welcoming and friendly school in which pupils are happy, ready to learn and attend regularly. Pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and courteous and hold doors open for adults. They are keen and enthusiastic to share their learning and contribute their thoughts and ideas. The relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

Parents are fully supportive of the school and value the work of you and your team. As one parent commented on Parent View, 'This is a fabulous welcoming school which puts the children's best interests first.' Another parent commented to me that, 'This is a brilliant school, there's nothing I would change.'

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have led the school with determination and commitment. Your motto 'better together' is widely shared, and leaders, teachers and governors work effectively together to achieve it. You have strengthened your leadership team through the appointment of a deputy headteacher, which has enabled you to have a sharper focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You track pupils' progress rigorously, which supports you in holding teachers to account for the attainment and progress of pupils.

Subject leaders for English and mathematics are new to their roles and committed to improvement. They are outward-facing and work with the local authority and

other schools to develop their knowledge and skills effectively. As part of their work, subject leaders make regular checks on the quality of work in pupils' books and by visiting classrooms. Improvement points are highlighted in the school improvement plan and all staff work together to make sure that pupils make the best possible progress. All staff welcome the direction leaders provide, helping them to carry out their roles successfully. All staff members who responded to the staff questionnaire said that they were proud to work at the school.

At the time of the last inspection, your predecessor was asked to continue to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that the work given to pupils is not too easy or too hard. As we observed lessons and looked in pupils' books, we saw that teachers routinely do this through all parts of the lesson. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has increased over the last three years and is now average. You have, rightly, identified that middle-attaining pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 could be further challenged in mathematics, and you are taking steps to address this.

The school was also asked to increase the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. You have made changes to the way phonics is taught across school, which has had a positive impact. Teachers tailor activities well to meet pupils' needs and more regularly check pupils' progress. Consequently, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics screening check has improved over the last three years and is now closer to the national average.

Governors bring a wide range of highly relevant skills, knowledge and expertise to their roles. They have a clear understanding of the school's performance and receive useful and timely information to allow them to carry out their roles effectively. Governors provide good support to you and regularly hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make across the school. Governors are aware that the school's website is not fully compliant. They are also aware that more pupils could reach a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils' safety and welfare are high priorities. You ensure that staff training is up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities. You keep thorough records and act swiftly to follow up concerns, including by involving external agencies. Leaders and governors ensure that strong recruitment procedures are in place. They fulfil legal requirements when appointing new members of staff, ensuring that all relevant checks are undertaken.

You know the families of pupils who attend the school very well and are vigilant about their welfare, especially any whose circumstances make them vulnerable. You work closely with local agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the care and support they need.

Parents who responded to Parent View expressed mixed views about bullying. Pupils told me that bullying is extremely rare. When they have a worry, they are confident that adults will listen. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils know that they must not share their personal details or talk to people they do not know. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry. The first line of enquiry looked at how effectively leaders are improving the progress of middle-attaining pupils, especially boys, in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2. This is because, in 2018, the progress of middle-attaining pupils was below average, and these pupils made weaker progress than other pupils from their individual starting points.
- You have improved the way in which teachers plan reading lessons so that pupils are tackling more challenging texts, developing wider vocabulary and recording their responses in reading journals. In a Year 6 class we visited, we observed pupils confidently using dictionaries to find the definitions of words such as 'simultaneously' and 'obliterated' and using these words correctly in discussions with the teacher. In a Year 4 class we visited, pupils enthusiastically discussed the difference between 'inference' and 'retrieval'. Pupils, including boys, are enthusiastic about reading, and they read accurately and fluently. You have effectively developed a 'love of reading' across school. Pupils appreciate the fiction and non-fiction books on offer in the newly established classroom reading areas.
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are taught regularly. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to apply these skills by writing at length in different styles across English lessons and in different subjects. Pupils are given a purpose and audience for writing, which motivates boys in particular. For example, pupils have recently written a letter to the local MP expressing their concerns about the isolation of elderly people at Christmas. As a result of these letters, the local MP is visiting the school soon to meet pupils and discuss their concerns. As a result of your recent changes, middle-attaining pupils and boys are making good progress in reading and writing.
- My next line of enquiry was to explore how effectively leaders are addressing the progress that middle-attaining pupils make by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in mathematics. This is because, in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2018, middle-attaining pupils made weaker progress than other pupils from their individual starting points. By the end of key stage 1 in 2017 and 2018, attainment at the expected standard and at a greater depth of understanding was below average and weaker than in reading and writing. You have identified mathematics as an improvement priority.
- Pupils' skills in number and calculations are secure. Teachers make good use of the correct mathematical vocabulary and provide clear explanations. Younger pupils use drawings and resources to help them in their calculations. They are given a range of simple word problems to practise their skills. Recent training,

led by the mathematics leader, and work with local schools have resulted in some teachers providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills through completing challenging reasoning and problem-solving activities. However, our visits to classrooms and work in pupils' books showed that teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to tackle these more challenging activities regularly enough.

- Finally, I considered how well leaders ensure that pupils make good progress across key stage 1. This is because, in 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics was below average.
- Across key stage 1, pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, the quality of pupils' letter formation is weak, and the quality of handwriting varies. In reading, pupils' books are not always accurately matched to their ability, and they do not always enable pupils to use their phonics skills to help them read well. Furthermore, you explained that your new approach to the teaching of reading is not yet fully embedded in key stage 1. These aspects hamper higher proportions of pupils attaining a greater depth of understanding in reading and writing.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- greater opportunities are provided for all pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding to problem-solving and reasoning activities
- reading books are matched to pupils' abilities and allow pupils in key stage 1 to use their phonics knowledge
- handwriting skills are taught to a consistently high standard, particularly, but not solely, in key stage 1
- the school's website meets government requirements in respect of the information it provides.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Randall  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the English and mathematics leaders, your designated senior leader for child protection, your parental support worker, eight parents, six members of staff, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I talked with a small group of pupils informally during lunchtime as well as in the classrooms we visited. Along with you, I visited classes. I looked at current books from pupils in different year groups with the English and mathematics leaders.

I examined a range of documentation with you, including documents relating to attendance and safeguarding and the school's own analysis of pupils' progress. I took account of the school improvement plan. I reviewed the school's website. As part of the inspection, I considered the 47 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 24 responses to the staff survey and 19 responses to the pupils' survey.