

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 March 2019

Mrs Nicola Hair
Headteacher
East Herrington Primary Academy
Balmoral Terrace
East Herrington
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR3 3PR

Dear Mrs Hair

Short inspection of East Herrington Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 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 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. 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.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2018, your strong and purposeful leadership has enabled East Herrington Primary Academy to continue to flourish. Your vision for the school is clear and senior leaders and governors share your unwavering commitment to ensuring that pupils receive the very best education. Along with your chief executive officer, you have created a culture of high expectations that has led to high-quality teaching and very high rates of progress for pupils. Your passion for all pupils to do well is shared by all staff, and morale is exceptionally high.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary: they are polite, considerate and friendly towards each other and towards the adults who work with them. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their time in school and the many aspects of learning they enjoy. Pupils flourish both socially and academically and are a credit to the school and community. All of the pupils I spoke to told me how much they enjoy coming to school and feel proud to belong to East Herrington.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and your leadership. All of the parents who shared their view with me explained that leaders are readily available to discuss any concerns that they may have. Parents are delighted with how well leaders know their children's interests and accomplishments. As one parent commented to me, 'My child joined East Herrington at the start of this year, and she's settled very well; this is a fabulous school. I wish I'd moved her sooner.' As another commented, 'I am very happy with the progress that both of my children are making. They are both very happy at school. They are made to feel safe and secure and they are given many opportunities to succeed.' Over 100 parents completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and all would recommend the school to other parents.

Leaders, staff and governors have decisively addressed areas for improvement from the previous inspection. At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching so that attainment and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning were consistently outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and pupils now make rapid progress due to high-quality teaching. Teachers seek out independent learning opportunities for pupils and encourage them to persevere when learning becomes challenging.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading has improved significantly over the last three years. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading was in the top 10% of schools nationally. In mathematics, pupils' progress has been above average and in the top 20% of schools nationally for the last two years. In writing, pupils' progress has been above average for the last three years. Consequently, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been well above average for the last three years by the end of key stage 2.

Attainment at the end of key stage 1 is equally as strong and in 2018 was well above average. Furthermore, in 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was well above the national average. Children in the early years make very strong progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1. A higher proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception compared to the national average.

Governors are committed to the continued success of the school. They visit the school regularly and have a clear and accurate picture of the school's many strengths. Along with your governors, you have accurately identified the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plan clearly identify the correct priorities for improving the school further. For example, developing the skills of leaders of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is a priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective and fit for purpose. The school site is secure. Safeguarding records and all checks on the suitability of staff who work with children are thorough.

All members of staff have received relevant safeguarding training and know what to do if they have a concern. Safeguarding is high on the agenda of regular staff meetings, and this enables you to review procedures in school regularly and make changes where necessary. Governors receive annual safeguarding training.

Pupils are clear about what the school does to keep them safe. They talk knowledgeably about fire safety, road safety and e-safety and understand some of the potential risks of using the internet. Pupils told me that bullying is very rare in the school. They were confident that they could rely on members of staff to resolve any worries or concerns that they may have. All of the parents who completed Parent View agree that the school keeps their children safe.

Inspection findings

- At the start of my visit, we agreed a number of key lines of enquiry for the inspection. My first key line of enquiry was to explore how effectively leaders are improving progress in writing for pupils by the end key stage 2. This was because in Year 6 over the last three years although pupils' progress from their individual starting points has been above average, it has been slightly lower than in reading and mathematics.
- We looked at pupils' workbooks and saw that there was a high level of challenge for pupils in writing and strong progress was clearly evident in books. These same high standards and application of writing skills were evident in writing in science, history and geography. Displays of pupils' writing around the school are attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements very well. Writing at length in other subjects has a high priority across school.
- Your work as part of the Primary Writing Project has changed the way writing is taught and this is making a real difference. Regular training for all staff has developed teachers' confidence and knowledge of how to teach writing effectively. You have used links with other schools, including those in your multi-academy trust, to enable teachers to work together and compare and check the accuracy of their assessments. The school's own assessment information indicates that pupils are making very strong progress in writing across the school, with more pupils working at a greater depth of learning than previously.
- My final focus was to explore how well pupils develop a depth of knowledge and understanding across all subjects so that they achieve well.
- You and your leaders are passionate about pupils' wider development. This is evident in the breadth of the curriculum you provide and the range of clubs, visits and visitors that enthuse and excite pupils.
- The curriculum is planned well across the school. Pupils benefit from an exciting range of opportunities and learning activities which meet their needs very well. Pupils' work is of high quality as a result of teachers' high expectations and shows that, over time, pupils build on their skills in all subjects and, therefore, achieve very well. You rightly identified that the skills of leaders of subjects other than English, mathematics and science need to be developed further to ensure that pupils' achievements remain high in all curriculum subjects.

- The science curriculum is particularly rich, providing pupils with plentiful opportunities to learn to work scientifically by planning and carrying out experiments. Standards in pupils' books are high and show strong progress from the start of the school year.
- The school strongly promotes British values, through the curriculum and the warm and caring family ethos. Pupils take on responsibilities such as being members of the school council, playground buddies and eco-councillors. As one pupil told me, 'The eco-club is a club which helps make the world a better place.'
- Music is a strength of the school. Pupils regularly participate with other schools in singing competitions both locally and nationally. For example, pupils have recently performed at the Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. Pupils sing complex pieces from musicals such as 'Chitty chitty bang bang' and 'Les misérables' with great skill and are able to sing in harmony and in parts. As one pupil told me, 'Being part of the choir is a great opportunity to visit different places and meet different people.' As another commented, 'Singing helps me to be myself!' A range of opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments such as violin, guitar, drums, clarinet, harp, flute and cornet further enhances the curriculum and provides memorable experiences for all pupils. Through these opportunities, you are ensuring that pupils develop a love of and a thirst for learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide training and support to all subject leaders to ensure a high standard of pupils' outcomes in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sunderland. 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 senior assistant headteacher; your assistant headteacher; your English, mathematics and curriculum leaders; eight members of staff; three members of the governing body; and the multi-academy trust's chief executive officer. I talked with small groups of pupils informally in lessons and during lunchtime. I also met with eight parents at the beginning of the

school day. Along with you and your leaders, I visited classes and looked at current English and curriculum books from pupils in key stages 1 and 2.

I examined a range of documentation, including documents relating to attendance and safeguarding. I took account of the minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of how well it is doing, the school's development plan and the school's assessment information. I reviewed the school's website. As part of the inspection, I considered the 102 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 22 responses to the staff survey and 93 responses to the pupil survey.