

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Jo Gowers and Jo Pikulski
Co-headteachers
The Disraeli School and Children's Centre
The Pastures
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 5JS

Dear Mrs Gowers and Miss Pikulski

Short inspection of The Disraeli School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2019 with Ross Macdonald, Ofsted Inspector, 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 you have worked closely with your governors to prepare for the school to become a three-form entry primary school by September 2020. In addition to your appointment as co-headteachers, there have been changes to both the leadership and teaching team. You have worked closely together to develop a talented team of staff that embraces your vision that 'Learning is a journey, not a race'.

One of the strengths of your leadership is your ability to develop the skills of potential leaders and so empower them to take on leadership roles throughout the school. Leaders at all levels play a key role in developing and improving the work of less experienced colleagues. In addition to formal monitoring to check teachers' work, there are systems in place that allow teachers to visit each other's classrooms and to share their ideas. One member of staff wrote, 'Teachers are given many opportunities to discuss their ideas and opinions, and are listened to.' Consequently, there is an open culture in which teachers learn from each other and actively seek guidance and help. As a result, staff are highly motivated and ambitious.

You have created a delightful environment for learning in which pupils are warmly welcomed and feel safe and secure. The classrooms are bright and attractive with stimulating displays that reflect the quality of learning as well as providing pupils with helpful guidance. Staff take pride in their work and strive to make lessons interesting and meaningful for pupils. Parents who responded to the online survey are highly positive about the school. This is shown in the comment made by one

parent, who wrote, 'My son is thriving and has a real passion for learning that I'm sure is a direct result of the enthusiasm and quality of teaching at the school.'

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and they say it is a great place to be. They say that teachers make learning fun and that they love learning. They enjoy the opportunities to work and play alongside each other. They enjoy learning about the cultures and beliefs of those from backgrounds that differ from their own. They particularly value the inclusive ethos that permeates the school. They say that all pupils are treated fairly and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. Pupils know and understand the school's values and how these impact on their behaviour. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They behave exceptionally well in class and when moving around the school.

You and your governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. You have created an ambitious development plan, showing the actions you are taking to raise standards. This has already been instrumental in improving outcomes for pupils. Over the past three years, pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Attainment in these subjects has improved steadily over the past three years and is now broadly in line with the national average. You know that not all groups of pupils achieve as well as they should, and you are taking action to address this. You have improved the quality of teaching so that most teachers make effective use of pupils' progress information to plan their lessons. However, not all teachers consistently plan work that is at the right level of difficulty for all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors say that, 'Safeguarding is the golden thread that runs throughout the school.' They ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose. All adults in school are subject to robust checks before taking up employment, and all visitors to school are carefully checked. All staff know and understand what to do should they have a concern that a child may be at risk from harm. Systems to record concerns are thorough. This means that the designated leaders for protecting pupils ensure that pupils in need receive the appropriate support in a timely way.

Pupils say they feel safe because adults in school provide good care for them. They know how to stay safe in various situations, including when using modern technology. They say that there is no bullying in school. When they occasionally fall out with their friends, they sort it out themselves or seek support from an appropriate adult. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey agreed that their children are safe and happy and well cared for in school.

Inspection findings

- One of the aspects of the school's work that we looked at was how successfully you have closed the gap in outcomes for different groups of pupils. In the past, boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND) have not always made as much progress as other pupils. You have analysed the performance data and identified that a number of these pupils have additional barriers to learning. You have provided additional support in classrooms that helps these pupils to overcome their specific difficulties. You have ensured that, during lessons, pupils have plenty of opportunities to speak and listen and so develop and improve their vocabulary. This has increased motivation and encouraged both boys and disadvantaged pupils to take a more active role in learning and so improve their outcomes.

- Work in pupils' books indicates that the actions you have taken are showing signs of success. For example, boys and disadvantaged pupils show increasing confidence and stamina when they write. Some pupils who have SEND have made exceptional progress from the start of the year, and have demonstrated improvements to their handwriting, spelling and punctuation. In classrooms, trained teaching assistants provide good support to pupils who have SEND, including those pupils from the Additional Resource Provision. This helps these pupils to access learning and to feel included in the opportunities afforded to other pupils.
- We also looked at the extent to which the quality of teaching enables pupils to make rapid and sustained progress. In most classes, teaching is lively and engaging and enables most pupils to progress well. Typically, teachers are skilled at asking questions that require pupils to reason and to explain their thinking, and this helps pupils to understand what they are learning. One of the strengths of teaching is that pupils respond to teachers' comments about their work. In this way, pupils know what they have done well and where they need to further improve their work. They say that, 'Mistakes are our friend because they help to improve our work.'
- While teachers provide work that is suitable for most pupils, there are times, particularly in mathematics, when they do not provide work that is hard enough for the most able pupils. There are also occasions when the lower-attaining pupils do not have enough practical support to help them to access learning. This means that some pupils do not learn as rapidly as they might because the work is too hard for some and too easy for others.
- 'Courageous and contagious' are the core values underpinning the curriculum. It has been thoughtfully designed to promote pupils' positive attitudes and to add to their learning and enjoyment of school. It links closely with the school's values and helps to develop resilience and perseverance through activities that are imaginative and engaging. Through well-chosen topics, including World War II and 'Crime and Punishment', pupils reflect on moral, social and cultural issues that help them to become confident and reflective members of the community. By allowing pupils to reflect on differences, they gain a respect and an understanding of the values and beliefs of others.
- The planned curriculum enables pupils to gain knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. It builds on pupils' interests and develops their curiosity about the world around them. Often subjects link together, and this helps to deepen pupils' understanding. Recently, the curriculum has been enhanced by the inclusion of relevant texts that stimulate the interest of boys and of

disadvantaged pupils, and this is improving outcomes for these pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visits to places such as Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London. This helps pupils to gain a vivid understanding of what life in past times was like and to build a picture of what it means to be British.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers plan work that is at the right level of challenge for all pupils
- pupils are provided with practical resources to help them to learn more rapidly.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we visited a selection of classes in each year group, including the early years foundation stage. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books, and they spoke informally as well as formally with pupils at lunchtime. Discussions were held with three governors, including the chair of governors and several members of staff. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including school development plans, minutes from governors' meetings and information relating to pupils' behaviour and safety. The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 62 responses to the online survey and the 62 written comments on free-text. The views of staff were taken into account by analysing 57 responses to the staff survey.