

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 March 2019

Mr Paul Newton
Headteacher
Kelloe Primary School
Front Street
Kelloe
Durham
DH6 4PG

Dear Mr Newton

Short inspection of Kelloe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 March 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 your appointment, you have made many changes which have enabled rapid improvement to take place. You provide dedicated and astute leadership and demonstrate a passion and desire to provide the best for every child. The staff share your vision and hold you in high regard. Governors, parents and carers value your leadership skills and determination to raise standards and create opportunities. Parents who I spoke with informally at the start of the day, and those who made comments on Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, acknowledged the fact that the school is now much more a part of the local community. A number of them praised the good work of the school and, in particular, the professionalism of the teaching staff and teaching assistants. One said: 'I can't rate this school highly enough. My child has special needs and gets excellent support.' Another parent wrote: 'The transformation of the school since the change in leadership has been a joy to see. The teaching staff have always been brilliant, but the new head and deputy have brought a renewed positivity to the school.'

Pupils are proud of their school and those I spoke to were keen to describe the fantastic opportunities that they have. Pupils from Year 6 were eager to tell me about their involvement in the 'Prince William award', which focuses on teamwork, challenge and building an inclusive culture. Younger pupils were keen to tell me about their 'Forest Schools' work. They all said that they would recommend the school to a friend.

Your self-evaluation summary is accurate and correctly identifies the school as good and improving. You have formed an accurate view of its strengths and areas that are most in need of improvement.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. In 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the key stage 2 national tests increased greatly from 2017. In these subjects, attainment was high, with a large proportion reaching both the expected and higher standards. At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, results were higher than the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, all the pupils in this year group reached the expected standard, with nearly half reaching the higher standard. Teaching and learning are also strong in the early years with children making good progress from relatively low starting points.

Your relentless pursuit of developing the school further and providing the best for the pupils has meant that the areas for improvement which were recommended in the last inspection report have been addressed thoroughly and successfully. Significant work has been carried out to improve the reading skills of disadvantaged pupils, with the result that achievement and progress for this group are better than those of their peers. Provision in the early years has improved and the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has risen for the past three years and is now higher than the national average. You have accessed funding from a local business and this is being used to improve the outdoor area. When completed, this will provide children with opportunities to develop and use number and reading skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding leader, you have a comprehensive knowledge of those pupils who are at risk and you have forged close partnerships with parents and outside agencies. You and the administration team ensure that all the necessary safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that all records are of high quality and meticulously kept. All checks for the recruitment of staff are in place. Safeguarding training is a priority and, during the past year, all staff have been involved in child protection, 'Prevent' and e-safety training. Some training of governors has been carried out but more will be needed as the governing body evolves following the federation.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They said that bullying rarely happens, and, if it did, they would tell an adult immediately and it would be dealt with straight away. Pupils are supportive of each other and they all play well together. Pupils talked confidently about keeping themselves safe when they are using the internet and were able to describe to me exactly what I needed to do to stay safe online. They showed a good awareness of road safety and were keen to tell me about the 'parking tickets' that the school's 'mini police' had made to remind parents to park safely.

The views of the pupils were reinforced by their parents. Indeed, all of those who responded to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire agreed that their child felt safe and was well looked after at school.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry concerned overall attendance and persistent absence. This is because over the past three years overall attendance and persistent absence have been significantly higher than national averages. You recognise that this is a concern and have made concerted efforts to bring about change. At the end of 2017, an attendance officer was appointed using additional government funding. She maintains meticulous records, tracking the attendance patterns for every pupil. When concerns emerge, she quickly contacts parents and, in the case of vulnerable pupils, makes a home visit on the same day of absence. Pupils with poor attendance have also been invited to attend the recently relaunched breakfast club. Analysis of school attendance records for the current academic year shows that overall attendance and persistent absence have both improved compared with the same period during the last academic year. However, although moving in the right direction, there is still work to be done and this is highlighted in your school improvement plan.
- Another line of enquiry focused on the teaching of spelling. While attainment in reading and writing has improved dramatically over the past two years, scores for the spelling component of the grammar, punctuation and spelling test for Year 6 pupils have stayed below national averages. The English leader was able to explain that several strategies have been introduced to improve spelling. A focus on improving the teaching of phonics is having a real impact with the result that pupils in lower key stage 2 are now competent spellers. In upper key stage 2, pupils use an online resource three times per week which focuses on reinforcing common spelling patterns. Across the school, explicit spelling sessions are built into English lessons, where specific spelling rules are taught.
- I was interested to find out more about reading and this was another line of enquiry. Over the past three years, attainment in reading has improved dramatically in both key stages. The progress that pupils make in reading is equally impressive. Key stage 2 progress measures for 2018 placed the school in the top 10% of schools nationally. Across the school, a strong reading culture has been established. In the early years, children are encouraged to talk about and retell the stories from their class picture books. In key stage 1, staff training has ensured that the teaching of phonics is of a high standard and this is reflected in the increased proportion of pupils meeting the expected threshold in the phonics screening check. Pupils in key stage 2 have 30 minutes per day which is dedicated to personal reading and new class texts have been purchased to support themes in English. Those pupils who are reluctant or struggling readers are well supported by 'Beanstalk Readers', a group of volunteers who visit school on a weekly basis. The English leader has worked hard to involve parents and this has helped raise the profile of reading, one example being the Reading Café where parents come into school and read with their children. Older pupils that I heard read did so with fluency and expression while younger pupils were able to apply their phonics skills effectively and confidently. During our learning walk, we

were able to observe pupils in key stage 2 using their reading skills to answer challenging comprehension questions.

- Although the school is in a deprived area, you are determined that pupils should have every opportunity to experience the world beyond the local area. During the time that you have been at the school, you have organised a skiing holiday to Chamonix and a residential visit to London. The acquisition of a school minibus has meant that pupils are able to travel to sports and music events. Pupils were keen to describe the large number of after-school sports activities that were provided and how these helped them to stay fit and healthy. While much work has been done to improve English, mathematics and science, you appreciate that there are still opportunities to further enhance work in history and geography. My analysis of the work in pupils' topic books would support this.
- Another line of enquiry focused on the provision for early years children. Provision has improved steadily over the past three years and in 2018 nearly all achieved a good level of development. New staff have been appointed. Strong links have now been established with parents, who make regular visits to school for 'stay and play' sessions. Teachers have also invited parents to observe the teaching of phonics and number, with the result that children can be supported at home. A more focused approach to reading and mathematics has also accelerated progress. Although pupils achieve well in reading, writing and number, I noticed that few boys reach the higher standard in these areas. The early years leader was able to explain that a focus on developing basic skills and the introduction of topics that specifically appeal to boys are impacting in a positive way on boys' progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school achieve well and make good progress. In 2018, progress made by these pupils was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. It is clear from your targets and pupils' exercise books that the most able disadvantaged pupils are being challenged to attain the highest possible standards.
- While carrying out a scrutiny of the written work from several year groups, I noticed that, although the content of the work is of a high standard, the presentation is, at times, untidy. You have identified this and intend to implement a new handwriting programme throughout the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on improving pupils' overall attendance and on reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent
- there is continued development of the wider curriculum so that pupils acquire a deeper understanding and increased subject-specific skills in history and geography
- a universal handwriting scheme is developed to ensure a consistent approach to the presentation of written work.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Knowles
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the leader for English, the early years leader, the school office manager, the attendance officer and three members of the governing body. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school's improvement plan, assessment data and the recent visit notes from the local authority school improvement partner. I spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the day and considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met formally with three groups of pupils from a range of year groups. The first group discussed safeguarding and behaviour with me. The second group talked about reading and I listened to them all read. The third group described the wider curriculum and extra-curricular activities. I also spoke with pupils informally in lessons and around school. You and I observed a range of learning across all classes, including number work in Reception and key stage 1 and reading and mathematics in key stage 2. We also visited the early years to gauge the quality of provision outdoors. During the afternoon, I carried out a scrutiny of the written work from several year groups and looked at the learning journals for early years children. I also analysed the responses from Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.