

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 March 2019

Ms Joanne Borley
Executive Headteacher
Walpole Cross Keys Primary School
28 Sutton Road
Walpole Cross Keys
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE34 4HD

Dear Ms Borley,

Short inspection of Walpole Cross Keys Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The school became an academy in 2016 as part of the West Norfolk Academies multi-academy trust. New executive senior leaders have worked relentlessly to stabilise the school after a period of change. Support and leadership expertise from the trust is helping the school to improve further. The trust's policies and procedures provide a strong and helpful foundation on which school leaders can base further developments and develop consistency.

Walpole Cross Keys is a small school which is very much at the heart of the community it serves. Staff know pupils well and are effective in meeting their individual needs. This includes extensive support for their well-being. Parents, staff and pupils, in response to Ofsted's online questionnaires, report positively about the school.

Parents' free-text responses reflect the views expressed in Parent View, 'There have been some really positive changes in the last six months.' While a few parents report concerns about behaviour in the past, parents also acknowledge that leaders are effectively addressing these. Most parents would recommend the school.

In response to the questionnaire, staff were overwhelmingly positive about how well the school is led. They are proud to work here. Many report that the school has improved and they feel that they are well supported by leaders. Professional development and training opportunities provided by leaders and the trust are

appreciated by all respondents.

Pupils also are positive about the school saying, in response to their online questionnaire, that they enjoy school and learning. They also report that behaviour is good, they have plenty of opportunities for physical and emotional health development and that they are taught to respect others. Most would recommend the school to a friend.

Governors support and challenge the school effectively. They work closely alongside leaders to check the work of the school and hold senior leaders to account. They understand that high-quality teaching needs to be in place in all classes to improve pupils' achievement. Governors access training to improve their skills further. Governors are working with leaders to refine their evaluation of the school's performance in the light of recent improvements.

All pupils benefit from strong and supportive relationships with each other and with staff. Clear routines and expectations support learning well. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' and use mistakes as learning opportunities. They conduct themselves properly in lessons and around the school. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well. Staff plan regular opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, such as during an interactive assembly observed with 'do not judge a book by its cover' as its theme. Fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law are promoted too.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. The leadership team and trust have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Required policies and training for safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. All staff and governors participate in regular training to keep them abreast of local and national developments. Policies are thorough, up to date and regularly reviewed by leaders and governors. Staff know pupils and their families well and are vigilant to any concerns. They know the procedures for reporting these concerns and a senior leader oversees the safeguarding process and paperwork, involving external agencies where appropriate. Pupils say they feel safe, and most parents agree. Pupils report that they know who to talk to if they have any concerns and they are confident that any issues will be dealt with. The checks made on adults working or supporting pupils in school meet requirements and records are appropriate and stored securely. Staff closely monitor arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety on the school site.

Inspection findings

- I looked at pupils' attendance and particularly focused on those pupils who are persistent non-attenders. This is because attendance rates at the school have been below national averages for at least three years. Persistent non-attendance has been variable. Given that good attendance promotes good achievement, I wanted to see what action leaders were taking to make improvements.

- Leaders are taking an increasingly proactive approach to school attendance. They monitor it closely and have introduced fines for holidays taken during term-time, 'late gate' checks and awards for good attendance. Case studies indicate that these strategies are beginning to show impact on individual pupils' attendance and fewer holiday requests have been received this year. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, are benefiting from being in school more regularly.
- I investigated pupils' progress from their starting points in all three classes as historically, by the end of key stage 2, attainment has been variable and progress broadly average. No pupils have achieved greater depth or the higher standard for the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics combined. I therefore also looked at provision for the most able pupils. Because there are very small cohorts of pupils at Walpole Cross Keys, no clear conclusions can be drawn from published performance data.
- In the early years and key stage 1 class, pupils work together well. The class teacher and teaching assistants work skilfully to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Progress is improving over time. Current school assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that more pupils are reaching the attainment targets for their age in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years, and some are exceeding them.
- In the key stage 2 classes, inspection evidence and your monitoring indicate that progress and attainment are also improving. The rich and engaging curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills. English and mathematics are taught well. More pupils than in previous years are working at and/or exceeding attainment targets for their age. Even so, the most able pupils are not provided with work that stretches them or ensures that they regularly grapple with learning. Too often these pupils complete less challenging work first, before moving on to planned challenge tasks. As a result, too few attain the higher standards or greater depth.
- Another area for investigation was pupils' progress in reading and phonics, as attainment in these areas has been weaker than in other subjects. Leaders have implemented a range of strategies to remedy the situation. These include special reading programmes to improve pupils' progress and work with parents to promote reading, such as reading cafes. Leaders' monitoring indicates that these strategies are demonstrating a positive impact.
- The school's pupil performance information and evidence from the inspection suggest that more pupils in all classes are working at attainment expectations for their age in reading than in previous years. Some pupils are now working at greater depth and the higher standards. This is due to a focus by leaders on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching of phonics is consistent and generally effective. Pupils are grouped according to need and demonstrate age-appropriate skills and understanding. They are gaining confidence and can apply their phonological skills to extended writing tasks and other work in the wider curriculum. According to the school's current assessment information and inspection evidence, more pupils than last year are demonstrating to teachers their ability to succeed in the forthcoming Year 1 phonics screening check.

- As the school has a relatively high percentage of vulnerable pupils, I focused on how well these pupils are being supported, using the additional funding provided. Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), have arranged personalised extra teaching to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCo monitors each pupil closely and measures the impact of these interventions. Evidence from the inspection indicates that more pupils with SEND than before are making strong progress.
- The executive deputy headteacher monitors the additional support provided for disadvantaged pupils and reports regularly to governors. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is also improving. The proportion of those making strong progress is rising because adults are supporting them well in lessons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent non-attendance so that they reach the national averages
- they increase the percentage of pupils achieving the higher standards and/or greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by providing further challenge to the most able pupils
- they further strengthen the progress made by all pupils and particularly disadvantaged pupils so that any gaps between their attainment and others nationally diminish
- the proportion of pupils with SEND making strong progress continues to rise in line with all pupils nationally with similar starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Bell-Cook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I worked alongside several executive senior leaders and carried out a range of joint inspection activities. These included: observations of teaching; learning walks; scrutinies of pupils' work; an analysis of the school's current performance information; discussions with pupils, parents and staff; and consideration of a range of the school's documentation including the school's self-evaluation, website, policies and procedures. The results of 10 responses to Ofsted's online

questionnaire, Parent View, and 11 responses to the staff survey were scrutinised. I considered six free-text responses from parents and analysed answers from 10 pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.