

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



29 April 2019

Mr Guy Walsh
Headteacher
Denton Community Primary School and Nursery
Acacia Road
Denton
Newhaven
East Sussex
BN9 0QJ

Dear Mr Walsh

Short inspection of Denton Community Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have successfully created a culture of nurture and care for pupils and their families. Your desire for pupils to have the best education and life opportunities shines through your approach to everything that takes place in the school. You want every pupil to be the best they can be. Alongside your staff, you celebrate each pupil's successes, whatever they are. You welcome every child from your local community, whatever their needs, to your very inclusive school.

You know the school well. Where you have identified necessary developments, your actions have been effective and have led to improvements in pupils' learning and progress. Subject leaders have successfully introduced new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics. They have correctly identified the next steps they need to take to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders need to continue to develop their leadership skills to ensure that all pupils consistently use the new approaches and resources well. Although pupils enjoy the challenges they have been set as part of the new approaches to learning, they say they could sometimes work a little harder.

Your governors are knowledgeable and hard-working. They care about the school, give generous amounts of their time, visit frequently and understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are highly supportive of you and your staff and have high expectations of you as a leader. However, the workload of the

governors is excessive, because there are so few of them. This hampers their ability to be strategic, because most of their time is taken up with routine tasks.

Pupils enjoy the school and the subjects they learn. They appreciate the staff and say that they will always help them with their learning. Some parents and carers raised concerns about pupils not behaving well in the school. Pupils said this was not the case. They say it is easy to make friends and that staff swiftly manage the small number of pupils who do not behave well. Behaviour seen during the inspection was good. Pupils play well together in the playground. They concentrate in lessons and are keen to learn.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, particularly the care and support their children receive. One parent expressed the views of many when they said: 'I am proud to have both my children at this school and couldn't think of a better place for them to be.' Parents appreciate and enjoy the links they have with the school. You encourage them to come to assemblies, which are well attended. Talking to parents at the start of the day, several told me they receive good information from staff regarding their children's progress and that teachers always have time to talk to them.

At the last inspection, you were asked to develop more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in a wider range of subjects. Your English leader has tackled this successfully. Pupils use their writing skills well to record their learning in their topic books and in other subjects, such as religious education.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe and do everything you can to provide additional support for families who need your help. All the relevant safeguarding checks and records are in place. You use a comprehensive induction package with new staff to ensure that nobody works with pupils until their safeguarding training has been completed. Adults are fully aware of how to report any concerns. Practice is strong, and staff monitor pupils carefully.

Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school is a safe place. Pupils trust the adults who care for them and say that there is always someone they can talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online. Leadership is committed to improving pupils' attendance. You firmly believe that regular attendance improves pupils' learning and their life opportunities. Alongside your inclusion leader, you provide practical support to parents to help them get their children to school. This has resulted in improved attendance for those who have been persistently absent.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on: safeguarding and attendance; the progress pupils make in their learning; how well leaders use the money they are given to support vulnerable pupils: and the breadth and balance of the wider curriculum.

- Your new approach to the teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils' number skills are practised for fluency and applied to solve problems effectively. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to explain their thinking and challenge themselves, deepening their understanding so that a greater number achieve at the higher standards.
- In English, pupils write at length and most can spell accurately at an age-appropriate level. However, they need to be challenged to extend their vocabulary so that they use language with greater precision in their creative writing.
- You spend the pupil premium effectively. The additional support provided to help disadvantaged pupils emotionally and educationally has enabled vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. This has led to better academic outcomes for this group. A 'times tables' programme has been particularly effective in motivating pupils to learn.
- You have spent some of the premium on a dedicated teacher to support disadvantaged pupils. This has been effective, and pupils who attend her sessions have made very good progress.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and vibrant. Pupils enjoy the wide range of learning experiences provided. During the inspection, pupils were excited to be taking part in Bollywood Dancing as part of their 'India' topic, and children in early years were enjoying their learning activities, suitably dressed for their 'Pirate Day'. Pupils particularly enjoy school trips and visitors. These are educational and encourage them to be aspirational about their future lives.
- You have developed curriculum maps and skill-progression overviews for each year group. This has made sure that pupils are learning the appropriate content and skills for their age, when topics are the same across more than one year group.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the governing body is strengthened so it can be more strategic
- middle leadership is further developed so it has a greater impact on pupils' learning and progress across the school
- Pupils, particularly the most able, are appropriately challenged across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders, two governors, a group of pupils and the business manager. I telephoned a representative of the local authority. I visited all classes with you to observe teaching and learning. I considered 14 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire, 20 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 81 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. I also took account of 33 free-text comments from parents. I analysed a range of the school's documents, including: leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning; minutes of the governing body's meetings; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.