

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 June 2019

Ms Sarah Grant
Headteacher
Swillington Primary School
Church Lane
Swillington
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS26 8DX

Dear Ms Grant

Short inspection of Swillington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 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 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 joined the school in September 2018 and are working successfully with the executive headteacher and chief executive officer of the trust to continually review and improve teaching and the wider curriculum on offer to pupils. Pupils are happy in school. They really appreciate their teachers and the many extra-curricular clubs and activities on offer to them.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the teaching of mathematics and to make sure that the most able pupils were challenged in this subject. The leader in mathematics is a specialist teacher and has a well-developed understanding of her subject. She was able to show many examples of checking the quality of teaching and the actions she has taken to provide additional training to the whole staff or support to individual teachers as a result of her findings.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils in mathematics and provide challenging, open-ended tasks that encourage pupils to think hard about problems. Teachers in most classes are effective in promoting pupils' understanding of technical vocabulary and are good at modelling mathematics language for pupils. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows strong progress. In key stage 2, pupils convincingly demonstrate fluency and reasoning and the most able pupils show mastery, successfully rising to the additional challenge provided by their teachers. Leaders were also asked to improve the teaching of handwriting. Leaders have introduced a new handwriting policy and there is now a high degree of consistency

in the way pupils form their letters. The vast majority of pupils present their work well, taking pride in producing neat, cursive writing. Expectations of pupils' handwriting is high, and staff provide additional teaching for those pupils who struggle with handwriting. Pupils who write well enjoy being recognised in weekly 'tweets' to parents and carers, and are rewarded in assemblies.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders' approach to safeguarding is robust. The designated safeguarding team is well trained in different aspects of child protection and their notes show that valuable work with external agencies and timely interventions have been made to safeguard and support pupils.

The learning mentor provides regular counselling to pupils and their families and this has had a positive effect on the behaviour and attendance of vulnerable pupils. As a result of effective work with parents, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with national figures and the proportion of pupils regularly absent has fallen below that seen nationally.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to find out if teaching is consistently good across the school and whether pupils are set to achieve better outcomes as a result. You have recruited two new teachers, who are performing well because of effective support and guidance from senior leaders. Leaders have commissioned a review of teaching and are acting to implement recommendations so that teaching continues to improve. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information shows that more pupils are on track to achieve standards expected for their age, at the end of key stage 1 and 2, this year.
- I wanted to find out whether the teaching in early years was effective in helping children to get off to a good start in writing. In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development had fallen from 2017 and was low when compared to national figures. This was mainly due to unsuccessful teaching during one year that resulted in low proportions of children showing typical skills in writing.
- Staff are now successfully promoting writing for the most able and middle-ability children: their work shows that they are mastering the ability to write simple words and sentences and are mostly forming their letters correctly. However, low-attaining children are less successful in their writing. This is because staff have not fully agreed and developed a common approach to writing, nor have they developed a sufficiently systematic approach to teaching phonics that will help all children to get off to a more rapid start. This said, because of improved teaching, more children are currently on track to reach a good level of development than in previous years.
- I also wanted to know what effect leaders' spending of the pupil premium was having on academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This was because disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well in writing as in reading and

mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Leaders have introduced effective systems to identify pupils' needs and to track disadvantaged pupils' progress.

- Despite this, some of the youngest disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with their peers, often because they are challenged by special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), particularly speech, language and cognition difficulties. Staff have responded with bespoke teaching to help pupils make progress in phonics, spelling, handwriting and in social and emotional skills but all would benefit further from a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and writing, across the early years and key stage 1.
- Leaders have focused on diminishing the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in key stage 2. Additional teaching has successfully closed gaps in learning by Year 6.
- Through Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, several parents raised concerns about pupil behaviour and parents spoken to expressed mixed feelings about the management of pupils' behaviour in the school. During the inspection, I observed that pupils display good attitudes to learning and pupils' books show the vast majority are productive, work hard and achieve. I saw the consistent and effective use of behaviour management strategies in use by staff that encouraged pupils to stay on task and saw pupils commended for appropriate learning and behaviour.
- The few pupils with SEND receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants to help them manage their behaviours. Pupils report that almost all lessons proceed without interruption and staff say that pupils behave well in school. However, leaders have not successfully explained and shared their definition of bullying, or their methods of behaviour management, with parents. Leaders acknowledge that they could do more to improve communication with parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- support teachers to develop an effective approach to the teaching of writing, making sure that it is consistently used through early years and key stage 1
- develop quality and consistency in the teaching of phonics for all pupils, including low-prior-attaining pupils in key stage 2
- move quickly to consult with and improve communication with parents, including sharing the school's approach to behaviour management, so that parents feel confident in the work of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met throughout the day to discuss different aspects of the school's work and visited classrooms together. I met with three representatives of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust. I scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding procedures and looked at assessment information. I considered the views of 19 responses of staff to the online questionnaire. I talked to parents at the school gate and considered 104 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I talked to pupils about their learning in lessons and at lunchtime and looked at 22 responses from pupils to the online questionnaire.