

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 July 2019

Mr Matthew Dineen
Executive Headteacher
Towers Junior School
Windsor Road
Hornchurch
Essex
RM11 1PD

Dear Mr Dineen

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 December 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You are an effective executive headteacher who demonstrates strong ambition and high expectations for all pupils and staff. Since your appointment in September 2018, you and your head of school have had a profound impact on school improvement. Leadership at all levels, including governance, is strong and the federation of both the infant and junior schools gives you further capacity for future improvement.

Current pupils are making good progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 is above the national average for age-related expectations. Outcomes for the most able pupils who are working at greater depth are also above the national average.

Pupils reported that they feel safe and well cared for. They take a pride in their school and the ethos is affirming, inclusive and nurturing. The school's core values statement, 'We build our future together', is well known to pupils and they articulate this further into B for being respectful, U for unity, I for independence, L for love of learning and D for determination. Pupils show positive behaviours for learning and they are keen to reflect and emulate the school's values. Parents and carers reported that their children are happy in school and highly motivated by their learning. One parent reported, 'My children love it here and they are thriving.'

At the time of the previous inspection, it was reported that questioning skills needed further development to support pupils' learning. You have worked well with senior leaders to improve teachers' subject knowledge through high-quality professional development training. Your coaching and mentoring support has encouraged

teachers to become reflective practitioners. You have developed teachers' questioning skills to ensure that learning opportunities challenge pupils' thinking, deepen their understanding and encourage their independence.

Support staff have received training to develop their subject knowledge and teaching skills. They deliver a wide range of additional catch-up activities where needed in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assistants are effective in their roles and are deployed well.

Inspectors previously also reported that pupils required greater opportunities to understand diversity in the life of modern Britain. Displays and assemblies now reflect the rich traditions of languages, faiths and cultures represented in the London Borough of Havering. Pupils acknowledge and celebrate differences and respect for the feelings of others is evident in all classrooms.

Governors are knowledgeable and offer an extensive range of skills to support school leaders. They know their school very well through regular school visits and curriculum audits. Governors and leaders have a realistic understanding of school self-evaluation and have identified the appropriate key priorities to move the school forward. Governors ask the right questions and provide strong support and guidance to all staff. Governors have been instrumental in creating the federation of the infant and junior schools. The federation is raising standards in both schools and ensures that transition from Year 2 into Year 3 is seamless and builds on prior learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. All staff have had training and regular updates on keeping children safe. Staff are aware of potential risks to children and they are vigilant in their duty of care. All concerns are reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead, who works closely with the local authority safeguarding board to make referrals when necessary. Records are detailed and school leaders have developed strong working relationships based on trust and respect with families. The role of the home-school support worker ensures that vulnerable families are listened to and signposted to outside agencies who can support parent well-being and mental health.

Safer recruitment employment checks on staff are thorough and are recorded clearly on the school's single central record. Governors have expertise within safeguarding and safer recruitment practice and work closely with staff to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Risk assessments are detailed for all on-site activities to ensure that the site is safe for pupils and equally rigorous for educational visits off-site.

Pupils reported that behaviour in the playground is calm and supportive. When rare incidents of poor behaviour occur, pupils reported that they know who to approach for help and incidents are dealt with swiftly. First-aid records show that accidents are dealt with sensitively and appropriately.

School leaders have worked with outside agencies to raise awareness of keeping children safe in the wider community. Workshops and assemblies have highlighted the dangers of knife crime, drugs and gang culture.

Inspection findings

- We agreed three key lines of enquiry for this inspection. The first line of enquiry examined the challenge available for pupils' learning within the curriculum.
- You, together with subject leaders, have introduced rigorous targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils know what they need to do next to develop their skills and to extend their learning.
- You have strengthened the quality of teaching and learning through developing teachers' subject knowledge and questioning skills. This is having a strong impact on pupil outcomes as evidenced in the new assessment procedures introduced to track pupils' progress.
- You have responded well to the needs of pupils who require additional support. A wide range of intervention groups are now available and the impact of the additional teaching on pupil outcomes is measured carefully.
- The leadership and teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Education, health and care plans are detailed to ensure that pupils have access to speech and language therapy, play therapy, sensory integration and behavioural support. Pupils with SEND are well supported and make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average in reading and writing and is broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. However, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils attaining greater depth in mathematics are below the national average.
- Current pupils are making strong progress over time. This is evidenced in pupils' outcomes in books from September to July. Curriculum plans show clear progression of skills, knowledge and experiences from Year 3 into Year 6.
- The second line of enquiry tested the effectiveness of the teaching of mathematics across year groups.
- Leaders have reviewed the mathematics curriculum to ensure that teaching is sequenced to build on previous learning. Misconceptions are identified and addressed in pupils' learning and pupils practise number bonds and multiplication tables to develop mental arithmetic skills. However, knowing more and remembering more through the rehearsal and application of key skills is yet to be embedded across year groups.
- Reasoning skills and problem-solving activities are variable across classrooms. Opportunities are often missed for pupils to analyse and examine their findings to provide a rationale for their answers.

- My final line of enquiry examined the English curriculum to ascertain if confidence, fluency and stamina were being developed in pupils' writing.
- Pupils have opportunities to write each day and are shown a wide range of writing experiences, which include descriptive, persuasive, narrative and autobiographical writing. Pupils understand the main features of chronological and non-chronological reports, can interrogate comprehension texts and are increasingly skilful in their use of spelling and grammar.
- Curriculum statements have been introduced into each year group to build in steps for success; for example, 'I can use powerful adjectives' and 'I can use fronted adverbials'. Progress is measured against the steps for success and all pupils are well supported in meeting the expected standard.
- Pupils are encouraged to build up stamina and resilience in their writing to produce independent work of greater length. Pupils reflect on their writing and have opportunities to edit and refine their writing into second drafts. Pupils' written outcomes are showing increasing maturity and an awareness of the needs of the reader.
- Leaders have introduced core texts of new reading material to challenge the most able pupils. Pupils are encouraged to use ambitious vocabulary and to develop greater maturity in their writing through the use of complex sentence structures. This initiative is proving successful and needs to be developed further for all ability groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- challenging reading texts support vocabulary, stamina and maturity in writing
- all pupils have opportunities to apply and rehearse their mathematical skills
- reasoning and problem-solving activities are consistent in all classrooms.

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

Yours sincerely

Tom Canning
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the head of school and senior leaders. I met with three governors, including the chair of governors, and I had a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement adviser. Your head of school and senior leaders accompanied me on my visits to classrooms. I

spoke with children about their work, looked at their books and heard children read aloud to their teachers. I scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and the school's assessment information. I met with you and your designated safeguarding leader to look in detail at safeguarding policies and procedures. I looked at safeguarding records, risk assessments and the school's single central record of employment checks for staff. I observed pupils at play in the playground and talked to pupils in the dining hall at lunchtime. I met with the home-school support worker and special needs coordinator to examine the support offered to vulnerable families and to pupils with SEND. I met with parents and pupils informally at the start of the day to seek their views of the school. I analysed the 69 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 58 responses to Ofsted's free-text service and the seven responses to the staff questionnaire.