

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18th July 2019

Ms Linda Waugh
Headteacher
Wainstalls School
Wainstalls
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX2 7TE

Dear Ms Waugh

Short inspection of Wainstalls School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils feel safe, and parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school. This is because conduct around the school is calm and purposeful, and that pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and adults. There is very little bullying, which also contributes to pupils' well-being and happiness. Parents and pupils report that whenever they report a concern, you deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils do particularly well in reading and mathematics, with a very high proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the age-related standard by the end of key stage 2. This is largely due to a strong focus on pupils using and applying their skills in these areas across different areas of the curriculum.

When the school was inspected in 2015, the inspector made some suggestions to leaders. The first was that the teachers use their understanding of the pupils' prior attainment to ensure work is challenging and that pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils make good progress because they know what they do well, and where they need to improve. This is helped by teachers' planning of lessons, which is closely matched to pupils' needs, especially in reading and mathematics. The inspector also recommended that teachers use the wider curriculum to create opportunities for pupils to write more regularly. Leaders have responded positively to this suggestion. Finally, the inspector recommended that the leaders improve the indoor and outdoor provision for the early years setting, which has been done. There are now vibrant areas for learning both inside and outside for children, where

they get regular opportunities to develop their skills across all learning areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school is vigilant in matters relating to the safety and safeguarding of pupils. They regularly check and update their protocols to ensure they are fully fit for purpose. In addition, leaders invite external agencies, such as the local authority, to check that the school's processes are robust. All staff are regularly trained. Staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive more intense training, so that they can deal with safeguarding matters with a stronger level of expertise. Governors are also well trained and understand their responsibilities around safeguarding pupils. Staff work with external agencies to ensure they can access specialist advice, when issues arise in school. They also deal effectively and robustly with any bullying matters so that they only occur very rarely. Linked to this, the school has systems in place to work with pupils when they have a worry or concern. This includes issues which have happened in, or out of, school. It also includes restorative practices, supporting pupils who fall out, so that they learn how to resolve arguments and move forward positively with their friendships. As a result, pupils enjoy very positive relationships, which is also why bullying is so rare.

There is information around school, and on the website, to keep parents, staff and pupils informed about what to do if they wish to report a safeguarding concern. The website also displays a record of the school's policies, which are clear. You and your staff provide events, such as parental meetings and assemblies, to keep different stakeholders informed about specific safety issues, for example, dangers associated with using the internet.

The school makes all the necessary recruitment checks on staff, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and that they have the right qualifications for the roles they have. These checks meet legal requirements. The school records incidents in a timely way, and staff work with different external agencies, as appropriate, to obtain specialist advice, as necessary.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I wanted to see how well writing is taught and what you are doing to improve the progress in this area. Progress in writing was a lot weaker than in reading and mathematics, in 2018. Writing progress was also a lot weaker than the national average in 2018.
- You have been very aware of the issues in writing and have worked hard, and effectively, to make improvements. These actions have led to creating more opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. It has also led to giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their writing. For example, they use a wider range of language, and ensure spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate. As a result, writing progress and attainment have improved for most groups, although outcomes remain less strong than in reading and mathematics.
- Linked to the writing issue, I also wanted to see what leaders are doing to

diminish the achievement difference between boys and girls. This was because girls have done better than boys in writing.

- As leaders, you have again worked hard to diminish the gender gap apparent in school and this has largely been effective. The difference has been significantly diminished at the end of Reception and in phonics. In key stage 2, progress of boys and girls is above, or well above, average and there is no significant gap between the two groups. However, in general across the school, boys' writing standards are lower than girls.
- At the school's last inspection, the indoor and outdoor provision in early years was an area for improvement. Given the issues around the gender gap in 2018, I wanted to see how well the setting provides a stimulating and purposeful learning environment for all children, so that all groups do equally well.
- Early years provision is now well organised, both indoors and outside. Children are well engaged and eager to learn. The children's outcomes show that there have been significant improvements recently to ensure that boys and girls do equally well. A very high proportion of pupils reach or exceed the expected standard for their age across the different learning areas. This means that both groups are well prepared for learning in Year 1 and beyond. In addition, those boys who are now in Year 1, who were less well prepared at the start of the year, have made accelerated progress and the difference between boys' and girls' achievement in Year 1 has diminished.
- The attendance of pupils is consistently high. However, in recent years there has been a slight decline in overall attendance, and a slight increase in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. I wanted to understand how effective leaders have been in halting this trend of decline.
- Attendance remains high, and persistent absence low. Improvements are apparent, showing the school is working hard to prevent further decline. The reason for the decline has been due to increased numbers of parents taking their children out of school for holidays. Working alongside the trust, the school is now taking robust action against parents who do this, to ensure they are fully aware of the importance of their child's regular attendance, and the damage that long spells out of school, for holidays, can do to pupils' progress and social development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the difference in attainment between boys and girls are diminished further, especially in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona McNally
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed teaching in all key stages to see its effect on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' work in books from several year groups, across a variety of subjects. I met with you and with other senior and middle leaders. I also held a meeting with governors and held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority, and with the chair of the trustees. I looked at the school's information about the safeguarding of pupils and examined behaviour and attendance records. I also checked a range of other documentation, including your self-evaluation, school development plan and assessment information. I held formal discussions with some pupils from Years 1 to 6, and I spoke informally to several pupils during breaktime. I considered the parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to parents' responses to the free-text questionnaire. I also spoke to several parents in the playground as they brought their children to school.