

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 March 2019

Mrs Shelley Desborough
Gamlingay Village Primary
Station Road
Gamlingay
SG19 3HD

Dear Mrs Desborough

Short inspection of Gamlingay Village Primary

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have successfully led the school through a period of considerable turbulence. The school roll has almost doubled, which has presented a challenge for settling in new staff and pupils. At all times, you, the governors and the trust have put pupils first, and this shines through in your focus on caring about every individual pupil. As a result, Gamlingay is a happy school, where pupils feel safe and make good progress.

Parents who spoke with me during the inspection told me that their children were happy and felt safe. They commented on the caring nature of the school and how approachable staff were. One parent commented how her child had come on 'in leaps and bounds' since transferring into the school. Responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, showed that a few parents would like more information about what their children are learning. You explained how you were organising reports and parent consultation sessions to ensure that good feedback is given to parents.

A strong partnership between the trust, the local governing body and the school ensures that appropriate challenge and support takes place. Where aspects of school provision are not as good as they should be, leaders take quick and decisive action to intervene, for example when key stage 2 mathematics results in 2018 were lower than expected.

Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas that require further development within the school. The quality of improvement planning is good and regular checks are made on the progress towards strategic targets. Governors monitor progress regularly through visits to the school and meetings with leaders

responsible for the delivery of the action plans. The trust provides effective challenge and support through the deployment of a primary executive leader who visits the school regularly to check on standards and safeguarding and to empower collaboration with other schools in the trust.

Together we visited all classrooms within the school, spending time observing teaching, talking to pupils and looking at their books. I found that the quality of teaching overall is securely good and that a particular strength is the use of effective questioning which strengthens and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the quality of relationships between adults and pupils within the class is positive. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing so that by the end of Year 6 they achieve in line with national expectations.

The curriculum is planned well and provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of activities. During the inspection pupils were seen to be enjoying purposeful learning about volcanoes; imagining what it would feel like to land on the moon; using mathematical equipment in key stage 1 to solve complex number problems; and solving difficult mathematics challenges in Year 6. Discussions with pupils show that they enjoy their learning and feel that they are supported well to make good progress.

Pupils' behaviour in class and at lunchtime is good. They have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy being given challenging work and show resilience when they find something difficult. At breaktime you have introduced a system of peer mediation where older pupils help the younger ones sort out any minor problems that occur on the playground. A peer mediator teacher is on hand to provide additional support where needed.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has created a strong culture of safeguarding. Systems for training staff are effective and regular updates are given throughout the year. This ensures that they know precisely what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Staff know their pupils and families well and act quickly if they identify a need. Concerns are recorded centrally and leaders use this information to seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. Concerns are acted upon quickly and leaders ensure that good communication takes place with all relevant parties.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that their teachers care about them. They know who to turn to if they have worries or problems. You work with a range of external agencies, including social care services, family support workers and counsellors, to improve pupils' safety further.

All staff and governors have received and read up-to-date documentation about safeguarding and child protection. Safer recruitment strategies are followed to ensure that those working in the school have been thoroughly checked. During the inspection, some minor administrative errors were identified in the information held on the single central record within the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we discussed three lines of enquiry on which I would focus during the inspection. The first area related to how well leaders support pupils to make good progress in their learning of mathematics. I wanted to investigate this area because in 2018, pupils' progress in this subject at the end of key stage 2 was weak.
- When the test results were published, leaders, governors and the trust reacted decisively to analyse the reasons for the low performance and put in place an action plan for improvement, which is being implemented effectively. This strategy, led by a strong leader of mathematics and other senior leaders, has focused on raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and further developing the use of additional intervention groups to support pupils making slower progress. In addition, leaders took the decision to change class arrangements so that lessons are taught in single year groups. Teachers and support staff have received carefully planned training to deliver this programme of improvements and it is working well.
- The trust has provided extra support through the deployment of a teaching and learning leader whose particular strength is mathematics. She has worked with leaders and staff to help implement the strategy so that it can have maximum effect.
- During the inspection we jointly observed a number of mathematics lessons in key stages 1 and 2. We saw teaching that was effective in developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. Teaching encouraged pupils to think deeply about their learning and provided opportunities for the most able to be challenged. I looked at pupils' books and examined the school's information on the current progress that pupils are making in mathematics. I found that across all year groups pupils are making good progress.
- We noticed that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the delivery of the lessons. Across the school there are examples of extremely strong and highly effective practice. However, not all staff are working at this standard and some would benefit from more opportunities to learn from the best practice that exists within the school and trust.
- The second line of enquiry was to consider the quality of leaders' support to enable disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress. I found that the pupil premium was being used effectively and that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress.
- You have taken personal responsibility for leading this aspect of the school and you showed me the individual plans that you have produced for each pupil. These plans identify the progress you expect every pupil to achieve, the barriers to their learning and the strategies that will be adopted to support each pupil. Teachers and support staff provide targeted support in the classroom. You check the effectiveness of these support strategies and hold regular discussions with staff to see how the pupils are doing. The governor responsible for disadvantaged pupils visits the school regularly to ensure that all agreed actions are being undertaken.

- The final area I investigated was the quality of support provided for new staff and pupils who join the school. The number of pupils on roll has risen significantly, with many new pupils and staff joining the school, often midway through the year.
- Induction for new staff joining the school is good. The leadership team ensures that all new staff have a planned programme of support. Mentors are allocated to new staff in order to discuss with them their teaching and ways to improve their practice further. There is a full induction checklist that is followed and training is provided around a school 'monitoring, evaluation and developing' cycle which aims to support continuous improvement in teaching practice.
- The trust has developed a strong package of professional development, which includes programmes for newly qualified teachers, those in years 2 to 5 of their teaching career and more established professionals. These programmes have had a positive impact so that the teaching and learning in school is securely good.
- Support for pupils new to the school is similarly effective. Discussions with pupils and their parents provided strong evidence to show that the school takes considerable care to ensure that new pupils feel welcome. The school provides visits of varying lengths to new pupils before arrival. Good communication with the previous school means that information about academic performance is gathered and any special needs are taken into account. New pupils have a 'buddy' to show them around the school and explain the school systems.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics across key stage 2 to attain or exceed the expected standard by the end of Year 6
- the quality of teaching is strengthened by embedding systems which share the best teaching practice that already exists within the school and the trust

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

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ramsey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I jointly observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work, alongside you and the assistant headteacher. We observed the teaching of mathematics in key stage 1 and key stage 2. I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation with you. I held

meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, the trust's chief executive officer, the trust's director of education, the trust's primary executive lead, the school mathematics leader and the trust's teaching and learning leader responsible for mathematics. I also met with three members of the local governing body.

I examined the single central record of staff and checked the school's procedures for safeguarding and child protection. I met with a number of parents before the start of school and talked to staff and pupils as we visited each class. I spent time observing behaviour during breaktime and lunchtime. I talked to two midday assistants and took account of 63 responses to Parent View and 12 responses to the staff survey.