

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 April 2018

Mr Andrew Marsh-Ballard
Headteacher
Priestley Primary School
Prince Charles Drive
Calne
Wiltshire
SN11 8TG

Dear Mr Marsh-Ballard

Short inspection of Priestley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2018, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is highly inclusive and its successes demonstrate your belief in equality of opportunity. You have continued to build on your vision of 'creating opportunity, releasing potential and achieving excellence'. By raising standards in English and mathematics, you have ensured that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. You have, since the previous inspection, developed a strong team of teachers and leaders who share your commitment to building the aspirations of the community and widening the horizons of all pupils.

Parents and carers value the exciting learning opportunities pupils have both within and beyond the school day. A typical comment from a parent echoed the views of others: 'The school organises a superb range of trips and a fantastic array of visitors.' Pupils are keen learners, eager to participate and answer questions in class. Their well-kept workbooks show the pride they have in doing their best. 'Spikey', the school's mascot for good behaviour and learning, encourages pupils to take responsibility for their continuing improvement.

You use your deep and accurate knowledge of the school's effectiveness to bring about continued improvements to teaching and learning. Teachers observe their colleagues' teaching so that the best practice in school is shared. There has been an emphasis on developing teachers' questioning skills and, during the inspection, I saw teachers deepening pupils' thinking with probing questions. Governors challenge you to provide evidence of improvements. They visit the school to make their own checks on the progress of initiatives to raise standards.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to raise the standards at the end of key stage 1. Teachers' assessment shows that many children start school with skills and knowledge below those typically found. Highly effective teaching has led to children making strong progress in the Reception class. Standards have risen steadily for four years. Children are therefore better prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen and are now broadly in line with national levels. You were also asked to increase levels of attendance. The parent support adviser guides and encourages parents and children to improve attendance when it falls below acceptable levels. However, you have, when necessary, issued penalty notices to parents when their children are absent for no good reason. As a result, levels of attendance have risen. You and your governors are continuing to ensure that improvements are sustained and built on.

Safeguarding is effective.

Through good training, strong policies and clear procedures, you have developed a culture of vigilance in the school to protect pupils from harm. Staff routinely report concerns they have about pupils' safety. This enables you to build a picture of when families need support from outside agencies. The parent support adviser points families towards additional help. She also builds families' capacity to help themselves through supportive parenting programmes. Governors make frequent checks on health and safety and safeguarding matters in school, including checks to ensure that all adults are safe to work with pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school. This was evident from my discussions with pupils and from the recent pupil survey you have carried out. They value being taught about road safety and how to stay safe when using the internet. A few parents raised concerns about the school's effectiveness in tackling bullying. Most pupils know the difference between friends falling out, silly play that may get out of hand and real bullying. If they have a concern, and most said this would be rare, they have increasing confidence in the investigations that are carried out. One pupil explained, 'We are getting better at telling adults and then it gets sorted out.' Staff record incidents and concerns raised by pupils conscientiously. Leaders deal with these stringently, including involving parents at the earliest opportunity. Staff keep records effectively so that they can identify any possible recurring patterns. Leaders continue to develop ways for parents to raise concerns. These now include a regular parent forum, parent surveys and an open email contact. Most parents spoken to before and after school have full confidence in the school. A typical parent's comment was, 'Great school, fantastic teachers. My child feels happy and safe in a supportive learning environment.'

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on several lines of enquiry. The first of these was to review the actions you had taken to improve pupils' writing. Pupils make progress in reading in line with that of the top 10% of schools nationally. Their progress in writing, while average, lags behind reading. Together with your experienced subject leader, you have identified and are improving aspects of pupils' writing,

which should lead to stronger progress. For example, you recognise that not all pupils use the correct form of the verb in their speech and are therefore less likely to do so in their writing. They do not naturally differentiate between the casual language of speech and the formality of writing. Samples of current work show that these aspects of pupils' writing are improving, and some pupils are deepening their writing towards the higher standard. Disadvantaged pupils are benefiting from this approach, and their progress is also accelerating. Pupils have responded equally well to your focus on improving spelling. Pupils use classroom resources, their knowledge of spelling patterns and their own editing to produce accurate pieces of work. Some pupils told me that spelling is their favourite subject and indicated that they are avid participants in the school's regular 'spelling bees'.

- Pupils are keen writers. Teachers make links between areas of learning, which encourage pupils to develop their ideas and make their writing interesting. For example, older pupils were learning about the Titanic in history and wrote factually about the ship and the disaster. In English, they wrote expressively as survivors or bereaved family members. Teachers in all classes ensure that learning in science, geography and religious education regularly acts as a stimulus for pupils' writing. Some pupils' writing is, however, hampered by weaker handwriting. This limits the amount and clarity of what they write.
- I next looked at the steps the school is taking to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standard in mathematics. Teachers use the school's distinctive approach to teaching mathematics conscientiously. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils are confident in mathematics lessons and enjoy the interesting activities planned for them. For example, a class used tablets to record time, distance and rest periods during a local walk. The pupils drew accurate time and distance graphs and identified the parts of their walk where they had rested or their pace accelerated. You agreed that reviews of pupils' work showed that, while teaching is challenging, there are still too few opportunities for the most able pupils to express their reasoning in mathematics. Consequently, when pupils do try to express their reasoning, their use of mathematical language to explain their thinking is too imprecise to show their deeper thinking.
- The school has a high proportion of disadvantaged children and, although most make good progress in the Reception class, historically some have needed to catch up in key stage 1. You have increased opportunities for staff in Reception and key stage 1 to work together, to ensure that pupils' academic and social needs are well supported when they move to key stage 1. Through individual learning journals, pupils' whole development continues to be tracked effectively across key stage 1. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, acquire phonic skills quickly and accurately. This is supporting their good progress in reading and writing.
- You have had a record of fixed-term exclusion, which has been higher than that found nationally over the past few years. During the inspection, pupils behaved well in the classroom and in the playground. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are proud of the extensive and attractive displays of their work around the school. Movement around school is orderly and classrooms are calm. You continue to support the pupils' good behaviour. For example, you now ensure

that pupils spend time in the summer term learning with their next teacher to support them over the time of change. A small proportion of pupils have social or emotional needs, special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, which means they have difficulty with learning in the classroom. In the past, the risk that other pupils' learning would be disrupted led to your using exclusion. Recently you have developed a Nurture base and programmes of individual support. These are having a marked impact on the progress of these pupils and are supporting their inclusion.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- continue to accelerate the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics so that a greater proportion achieve the highest standard at the end of key stages 1 and 2
- develop a consistently effective approach to improving pupils' handwriting
- fully communicate to the school community the school's robust approach to tackling bullying so that parents' confidence in the school is maintained.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning in lessons across the school at two different points in the day. I scrutinised a range of pupils' writing, mathematics and topic books. I visited the playground during break and lunchtime. I gathered pupils' views of the school through meetings with two separate groups of pupils, the school's pupils' survey and through discussions with pupils in the playground and in their lessons. I met with leaders and the chair of governors to discuss the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. I spoke to the vice-chair of governors on the telephone. I held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. I reviewed the school's procedures for safeguarding, including documentation and discussions with leaders and staff. I took account of the views of parents I met at the start and end of day. I also reviewed the school's recent parents' survey and the minutes of the parent forum. I evaluated the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of the 10 written comments. I also reviewed the questionnaires completed by 15 members of staff.