

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



11 January 2016

Mrs Pamela Monaghan  
Neville's Cross Primary School  
Relly Path  
Neville's Cross  
Durham  
DH1 4JG

Dear Mrs Monaghan

### **Short inspection of Neville's Cross Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 December 2015 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 May 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Since the previous inspection you have very effectively moved from a shared headship role to being the full-time headteacher. This carefully thought-through succession planning has provided seamless leadership continuity and assisted the school's journey of improvement. You have a well-founded understanding of the priorities for the school and have put in place clear plans to drive further improvement. Your goals, firmly embedded in these plans, are fully understood by all staff and governors. This has resulted in the leadership team maintaining the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have created an inclusive school ethos where pupils' academic and personal needs are paramount. Pupils feel safe, grow in confidence, and develop good learning behaviours. This is because everyone in the school nurtures and meets pupils' social and emotional needs. Equally you, your staff and governors are aspirational for pupils' learning, setting high expectations for achievement. You rightly challenge yourself and staff where further improvements are required.

The school has successfully tackled the two areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. English books demonstrate that pupils are now given dedicated time to write at length. Marking helps pupils to improve their grammar, spelling and punctuation. As a result, pupils' writing achievements have risen across the school.

The early years provision is much improved and children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills. Their progress has accelerated over the last three years and in 2015 the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is providing dynamic leadership to further improve early years provision and outcomes.

You are developing new systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievement in line with the new National Curriculum. Currently, staff and governors are developing their understanding of these systems and you know there is still more work to be done. You also know that more pupils need to make more than expected progress in mathematics and you have already put in place plans to address this.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors afford the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding policy and practice are frequently reviewed to ensure that processes are secure and best practice is maintained. Rigorous checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff have received safeguarding training and know what to do should they have any concerns. You have received training on the Prevent duty and other staff have received guidance to raise their awareness of the risks of extremism and radicalisation. School leaders respond swiftly to all safeguarding issues.

Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know whom they can talk to if they ever have concerns. Pupils say that there are no incidents of bullying in their school. The school's records show that incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are very rare and that these are quickly addressed by the staff. Parents and staff agree that pupils' behaviour at the school is good.

### **Inspection findings**

- Relevant professional development is in place for all staff and there are effective systems for checking on teaching to make sure that its quality is maintained at a consistently good level. You and the governors make rigorous use of performance management systems to ensure a climate of continuous improvement for leadership and the quality of teaching.
- The recently introduced systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress in mathematics are generating useful information. Staff are using this information with increasing confidence to support teaching and identify gaps in pupils' learning. Plans are in place to use similar approaches for reading and writing by July 2016.

- Pupils make at least expected progress in English and mathematics and many are making more than expected progress. In 2015, the proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils making more than expected progress in mathematics was not as high as the national average and you have promptly put in place improvements to tackle this issue.
- Pupils with special educational needs make at least expected progress and in some cases more than expected progress. This is because their needs are well planned for and the school involves parents and pupils in the planning process.
- Provision for children in the early years has developed due to your well-focused actions and the appointment of a deputy headteacher with the right expertise to lead and manage this phase effectively. A new teacher in the other Reception class has benefited from training by the local authority adviser and the deputy headteacher. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved over the last three years and in 2015 was above the national figure. This means that increasing numbers of children, including disadvantaged children, are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Middle leaders for mathematics and of provision for pupils with special educational needs have received leadership training from the local authority adviser. This has developed their skills in leading improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times is very good. They work hard and are keen to share their learning with adults. Pupils are proud of the responsibilities that they have in school. For example, playground guardians clearly explained the importance of their role in organising playground games for other pupils.
- Attendance levels are above the national average. Pupils are happy in school and value the learning opportunities it provides.
- The governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's priorities and the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' achievement. The audit of governors' skills and reorganisation of the committee structure have improved the support and challenge provided to school leaders. Leadership appointments and staffing arrangements are very well managed by governors. This has resulted in a leadership structure and staff profile that are well matched to the needs of the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all staff successfully use the school's new assessment and recording system to check pupils' progress in English and mathematics
- the proportion of pupils achieving more than expected progress in mathematics improves to at least the national average.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher and your middle leaders who have responsibility for mathematics and provision for pupils with special education needs. I talked with pupils about what it feels like to be a member of the school community and looked at responses to parent questionnaires. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority and with four governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. Alongside you, I visited two early years and three Key Stage 2 classrooms to observe teaching and learning. We looked at children's learning journals and pupils' work to consider the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.