

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 April 2016

Mrs Carrie Norman
Principal
Peckover Primary School
Leverington Road
Wisbech
PE13 1PJ

Dear Mrs Norman

Short inspection of Peckover Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 March 2016, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since leading the school from 2014 you and your senior team have ensured that Peckover Primary School has flourished as an exciting place for pupils to learn and staff to teach. This is reflected in the very positive comments expressed by parents and carers, such as 'the teaching staff at Peckover appear highly motivated and pass on their enthusiasm to the children'. As a result, pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. This includes pupils who found learning difficult or who were new to learning English when they entered the school. Strong progress in reading and writing and exemplary teaching in Years 5 and 6 are contributory factors. The whole school community is very proud of its achievements.

Your success and creativity in continuously improving the school and in tackling the issues raised at the last inspection show that you are well placed to realise your aim of making Peckover equally strong throughout. For example, you have ensured that children in the early years get off to a better start by using resources, including staff, more effectively. You have successfully raised attendance by making the curriculum more exciting. You have matched pupils' work more closely to their needs by using assessment more diagnostically. These improvements are underpinned by staff who work very well together and who value opportunities to learn from others. A recent 'science challenge day' you hosted enabled more-able children from other primary schools in the Brooke Weston Trust to work together. Peckover is fast developing a strong reputation. Inspirational leadership and very efficient and effective management are contributory factors.

Strong teamwork contributes to pupils feeling safe and supported. This includes extensive work with families and pupils who are in most need. You have followed up Ofsted's visit in November 2014 which commended pupils' behaviour and the use of 'the nest' for those requiring extra support. Better monitoring of pupils receiving support and additional nurture contribute to pupils' positive and purposeful behaviour throughout the school.

However, although their attendance has improved, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as their peers, particularly in mathematics. Successful work to improve their reading is helping disadvantaged pupils catch up, as is the early support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. One parent praised school leaders for promoting friendships between pupils from different backgrounds and cultures as a way of learning more about the wider world.

You balance topics about the familiar with the unfamiliar well. For example, classrooms recreating Wisbech market or topics which involve a visit to the local park contrast with topics about space travel and the Wild West. In Year 6, displays and artefacts related to the topic of the *Titanic* stimulated well-informed discussion and writing. Pupils were excited about sharing their knowledge with the Mayor of Wisbech who was due to take afternoon tea on their re-creation of *Titanic* the following day. The school gives all pupils an equal opportunity to gain inspiration.

You are involving pupils very imaginatively to take responsibility for their learning. For example, throughout the inspection the 'class ambassadors' were keen to explain to me their lesson and displays. Other pupil ambassadors who take a lead in promoting tidy classrooms, displays and school uniform help to keep standards high. The school council is businesslike and vigilant about pupils who might feel left out. The striking hats they wear in the playground make their role a highly visible one.

In the classroom, pupils persevere when working on their own and collaborate well when working with others. Their sense of purpose is driven by clear objectives set by staff. Lessons are conscientiously prepared and efficiently managed. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils' learning. Individual follow-up where any misconceptions are identified is a strength of provision. Pupils benefit from the constructive feedback provided. Literacy books are marked consistently across the school, ensuring that grammar, punctuation and spelling are checked and corrected. Pupils take pride in their work and present handwriting with increasing control.

Your own coordination of art and design shows that pupils reach high standards when skills specific to success in a subject are taught well, for example drawing. Pupils' topic books indicate that this approach is inconsistent between subjects. Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage. However, middle leaders approach their subject and phase roles very professionally. Their plans for improvement are based on secure subject knowledge and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recent developments include an after-school club to reinforce pupils' learning in German. During the inspection, a group of more-able linguists were able to use their skills at a workshop run by the local secondary

school. Such initiatives help pupils get off to a suitably strong start after leaving the school by building on the good primary education they receive.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your inclusion team and the governors take every precaution to ensure that pupils are helped to keep safe. The school consistently follows safeguarding policies and procedures provided by the trust which meet all statutory requirements. However, the strong safeguarding culture you have established within the school is not reflected in a policy distinct to Peckover and its site. You have ensured that safeguarding roles are highly visible which reassures pupils, parents and carers that safety is well managed. This includes pupil ambassadors for health and safety who help to bring any potential risks to your attention. Partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies contribute to secure and effective support for pupils. You ensure that staff are well informed about new guidance and trained accordingly, including on the 'Prevent' duty.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Strategies to raise attendance have proven effective. These include strong links with parents and carers and the development of an exciting curriculum that pupils find too good to miss.
- Improvements in the early years include better management of activities in classrooms and the outside environment. As a result, children are engaged in their learning from the start. The proportion reaching a good level of development has improved, although it is lower for disadvantaged pupils.
- Staff are matching work to pupils' needs more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. This includes earlier support for pupils new to learning English. Your publication of books to support children and their families to develop the literacy skills required to learn effectively shows your strong commitment to inclusion.
- Levels of challenge in Years 5 and 6 are particularly high. In these classes, staff use their knowledge of individual pupils expertly to target questions, group pupils and intervene skilfully. This is reflected in the pace of lessons and progress in books which is supported by feedback that sets high expectations.
- Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants show strong commitment to training and development. They share their expertise very effectively and adapt ideas seen in other settings well. Recently qualified staff are developing a repertoire of effective teaching skills as a result.
- Senior leaders inspire teachers, teaching assistants and support staff to develop professionally. They show strong commitment to their work as a result, reflecting the strong role models provided. Very efficient and effective management of the school contributes to its calm and cohesive ethos.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. High-quality care and a curriculum that provides pupils with rich first-hand experiences are contributory factors. These have a very positive impact on pupils' literacy and communication skills, including drawing.

- The roles and responsibilities that pupils develop contribute to their confidence that school is a safe and supportive place for all pupils. They are reassured by initiatives such as 'the nest' and 'nurture group' designed to help pupils resolve any issues that might impede their progress or participation in school life.
- Pupils make rapid progress in key stage 2. High levels of mobility and low levels of literacy earlier in the school contribute to slower progress in key stage 1. Improvements in pupils' phonics knowledge (phonics refers to letters and the sounds that they make) shows that pupils are developing a stronger base for learning.
- Topic books show that as pupils progress through the school they develop and apply their literacy skills increasingly in other subjects. Middle leaders are starting to monitor pupils' progression in the subjects they lead. Your portfolio of work in the subject you lead provides a stimulating example.
- The roles of the local governing body and board of directors combine well to support and challenge school leaders. Their positive impact on the school's strategic direction is reflected in their rationale for the changes made since you became principal. Comprehensive knowledge of the school informs their work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers
- pupils make consistently strong progress as they move through the school
- the continuity and progression developed in literacy is promoted in other subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Her Majesty's Inspector scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection. Meetings were held with school leaders, representatives from the local governing body and board of directors, staff, parents and carers. The inspection involved meetings with groups of pupils formally and informally, and scrutiny of their work. All classes were observed jointly with senior leaders. Additional documentation was analysed, including reports to governors, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and information about pupils'

attendance, behaviour and welfare. The inspector discussed the school with parents at the start of the school day, and analysed 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, 13 free-text messages and 34 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.