

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



19 January 2017

Miss Lucy Riley  
Headteacher  
Gunter Primary School  
Gunter Road  
Pype Hayes  
Birmingham  
B24 0RU

Dear Miss Riley

### **Short inspection of Gunter Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2017, 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 April 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Governors appointed you in April 2014, after the previous inspection. Your leadership and that of the deputy headteacher have proved to be a turning point for the school. You addressed head-on the longstanding issues you inherited. For example, since the previous inspection, a significant number of leaders, teachers and administrative staff have left the school. You managed the changes in staffing and the challenge of recruiting staff well. The appointment of the deputy headteacher in April 2015 has strengthened the capacity of the leadership team to secure further improvements.

Your passion and commitment are driving the school's ambition to be outstanding. You have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and staff share your vision. Staff strongly agree that the school is well led and managed and that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. Staff, governors and parents greatly appreciate the contribution you have made to raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes.

You and other school leaders, including governors, have a clear strategic vision for raising standards further. Your self-evaluation is accurate and informs subsequent policies, actions and staff training. For example, you recognised that the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leaders and managers needed to improve. You recognise, and it was clear during this inspection, that there have been improvements in the quality of learning and teaching and that this has ensured that

the vast majority of pupils do well in most subjects.

You and your team have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils do well in all year groups in a range of subjects. In addition, you and your team have secured sustained improvements in the teaching of mathematics. As a result, pupils have the necessary skills and mathematical fluency to be able to apply their understanding to a range of increasingly difficult problems. Information provided by the school and a scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the vast majority of pupils currently in the school do well in this subject as a result.

Children continue to do well in the early years, particularly in communication and language, literacy and mathematics. The indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and engaging environments where children have numerous opportunities to develop their vocabulary, understanding of mathematics and social skills such as sharing and taking turns. Parents are appreciative of the opportunities they have to be involved in their children's education and are pleased with their progress.

Pupils currently in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well across a range of subjects. Teachers and leaders quickly identify and support pupils' needs. Staff frequently and thoroughly monitor pupils' progress towards learning or behaviour targets. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning by developing pupils' thinking and learning skills such as resilience and perseverance. Teachers and teaching assistants work in partnership effectively.

The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well. Staff prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and to play a positive role in multicultural modern Britain. For example, the local Member of Parliament for Erdington visited the school to talk to pupils about what it is like to be a Member of Parliament.

Members of the governing body have a wide range of suitable knowledge, skills and expertise. This enables them to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to you and other leaders. They make sure that the school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to provide the right support to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Information provided by the school and the work in pupils' books show that this group of pupils currently in the school are doing well across a range of subjects. As a result, the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, and that of other pupils with the same starting points is diminishing. Governors have ensured that the school meets government requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You manage the arrangements for

making sure pupils are safe and secure extremely well. In your role as designated safeguarding lead, keeping pupils safe and secure is your first priority. You make sure that all staff are alert to any potential issues and that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. All policies and practice meet all the latest statutory requirements. Training for staff and governors is up to date. Staff have suitable and frequent safeguarding updates throughout the year. You and your staff are very aware of the potential risks and dangers that your pupils and their families face. You are not afraid to address safeguarding issues that arise out of school. For example, you recently challenged pupils' inappropriate use of 'Instagram', involving parents in finding resolutions to the problem. Parents speak highly of the help, support and guidance you and your staff provide. You use a range of outside agencies to support pupils and their families where appropriate. The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are detailed and thorough.

Pupils receive and understand advice and guidance on potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include, for example, the risks associated with using social media websites, mobile phones or when riding their bicycles on the road. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils know who they can speak to in school if they have any concerns or worries. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe and is safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas that need improving as a result of effective monitoring and reviewing of pupils' progress. You and your staff were disappointed with the 2016 results in reading and in writing in key stages 1 and 2 and in phonics in Year 1, results which you say were due to the legacy of previous weaker teaching. These issues have largely been resolved and pupils currently in the school are doing well.
- You rightly identify that cooperative and collaborative teamwork and appropriate and effective training have secured improvements. There is a combined and resolute effort to make sure all pupils do well. For example, you and your staff have worked hard to improve the quality of writing across the school. In addition, the teaching of reading and phonics was a top priority last year and has continued this year. The quality of pupils' writing for different purposes and audiences has improved as a result. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed that the quality of pupils' writing is of the same good standard in topic subjects, such as geography and history, as it is in English. Current information on pupils' progress in both these key stages shows that the vast majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, are doing well in literacy in all year groups and in phonics in Year 1. In addition, pupils' outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 2 for those who did not meet the expected standard in Year 1 were above national figures.
- The most able readers have access to a range of texts and, when reading aloud, are able to read fluently, with expression and an appreciation of the writer's use of grammar and punctuation. However, you acknowledge that a few lower-ability and lower-ability disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress

expected in their spelling, in their understanding of more difficult words or in their comprehension of what they have read. In addition, a small group of lower-ability pupils in Year 1 are not able to use their phonics skills to aid their spelling or to read more challenging texts successfully.

- You have modified the school's curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils better and to raise standards. For example, extra time is given to literacy and numeracy when needed. In addition you have increased the number of educational trips and visits so that pupils have a better knowledge and understanding of the world around them in order to develop their vocabulary and ability to write about their experiences. Pupils who spoke with me said that they really enjoy events such as the 'Shakespeare day' in Stratford and opportunities to take part in sport, plays and history workshops. You have made sure that there is a clear progression in pupils' learning between each year group, including a progression between Nursery and Reception.
- Pupils' attendance has been below national figures in the recent past. However, you and your staff have been determined to improve pupils' attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who regularly miss school. You have rewarded pupils for good attendance and taken action against parents who condone their child's absence from school. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved dramatically and is now broadly in line with national figures. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced similarly.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment. The work in pupils' books shows that they take their learning seriously and want to do well. Staff give feedback to pupils in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils use the information to reflect on their learning and to improve their work. Pupils told me that disruptive behaviour and bullying is rare and that staff deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. As a result, the number of poor behaviour incidents and fixed-term exclusions is significantly reducing.
- Information provided by the school is reliable and has shown a close correlation between predictions and actual outcomes in the last two years.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that lower-ability pupils are able to:

- understand and use a wider range of vocabulary when speaking and writing
- use and apply their phonics skills and other appropriate strategies to spell more accurately and to read a range of more challenging texts.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

At the start of the inspection, I agreed to focus on the effectiveness of leaders' and governors' actions to:

- improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics
- improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1, particularly for the middle-ability and higher-ability prior-attainment groups
- improve pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check
- improve pupils' attendance
- make sure pupils are safe and secure.

To explore these areas during the inspection, I:

- met with you, the deputy headteacher and members of the governing body, including the chair
- spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone
- heard pupils read
- spoke to pupils informally about their learning and school experiences
- scrutinised a number of school documents, including safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including the checks on staff's suitability to work with children; information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; and minutes of the meetings of governors
- visited lessons in all year groups with you and your deputy
- scrutinised a large number of pupils' books across a range of subjects
- considered the 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 25 comments received electronically; the six responses to the pupil inspection questionnaire; and the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.