

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 March 2017

Mrs Sheila Haigh
Headteacher
Ballifield Primary School
Handsworth Grange Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S13 9HH

Dear Mrs Haigh

Short inspection of Ballifield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created a calm, welcoming ethos and secured a culture of high expectations among the staff as well as the full support of parents.

At the previous inspection you were challenged to ensure consistently good teaching to strengthen pupils' skills in writing and to improve their handwriting and presentation. You have made sure that all leaders check the quality of teaching carefully to pinpoint precisely what needs to be strengthened and identify good practice that can be shared. You have given teachers time to observe good practice and checked that it is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers have adopted common approaches to develop good-quality writing and the teaching of other subjects.

You have increased teachers' expectations by providing clear guidance about what you require in terms of the quality of handwriting and presentation. You have made sure that there are opportunities throughout the week for all pupils to practise their handwriting and presentation skills. Pupils' skills have developed well and work is usually well presented and supporting secure learning. However, there are occasions when boys do not present their work to a consistently high standard in key stage 2.

You have been thorough in making sure that pupils use their writing skills effectively in a wide range of subjects and they apply their mathematical skills well. This was an additional area identified as requiring attention from the previous report. Pupils

write at length, especially in history, geography and religious education. Occasionally, English grammar, punctuation and spelling is not corrected quickly enough to put a stop to further errors.

You are providing pupils with good opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity in Britain and around the world, another area for development highlighted at the previous inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of the different faiths and festivals that are celebrated in Britain and around the world. Visitors provide first-hand accounts of what it is like to live in different countries and in different cultures. The school is a harmonious community, with pupils from a range of diverse backgrounds getting on well together.

More recently, you have focused on strengthening the quality of reading. You have made it clear to both pupils and staff that more-challenging vocabulary should be incorporated into reading materials. Teachers have developed high-quality materials and pupils routinely check the meaning of words in dictionaries to strengthen their understanding. Pupils are developing a wider vocabulary from the reading of higher-level texts. This is supporting good gains in reading, with pupils also strengthening their written work by using more extensive vocabulary.

Under your direction, new leadership in early years has strengthened the provision. Children's progress is good, with children learning in a very stimulating environment. This year, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is set to increase rapidly because of good leadership and teaching that is focusing strongly on strengthening children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have made sure that pupils, especially the most vulnerable, are well cared for. The school works closely and very effectively with parents and external agencies in the local authority to make sure that children's needs are met. Safeguarding records are of high quality and clearly indicate the school's commitment to keeping all pupils safe. Parents are unanimous in saying that their children are well cared for and safe at school.

Child protection training for staff and governors means that they are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about children's welfare. Governors make sure that all adults on the school site are checked to confirm that they are fit to work with children and the school's central register is well kept. Governors receive regular reports about safeguarding to make sure that children's needs are being met.

Inspection findings

- Your analysis of the work of the school is accurate and plans for improvement focus well on the key areas for improvement. You and other leaders have

identified key actions that need to be taken to strengthen outcomes and the quality of teaching. All staff are aware of what is expected and you check their work carefully. You have developed a very effective leadership team that is showing good capacity for further improvement.

- You have made sure that the additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent well. 'Pupil passports' clearly identify the needs of each of these pupils and the support they require to make good progress. You have made sure that teachers focus their work closely on supporting these pupils to improve their learning. As a result, these pupils are learning well.
- Teachers plan tasks that capture pupils' interests. This leads to good behaviour, inquisitive pupils and good attitudes to learning. Effective support and challenge is given to pupils of all abilities and their learning is usually checked carefully.
- Occasionally, questioning is not used skilfully to deepen the knowledge of all pupils. The checking of pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling is not always swift and leads to some pupils repeating errors. High expectations are the norm and pupils respond well to teachers' good guidance. However, very occasionally, the quality of boys' writing in key stage 2 slips and is not picked up.
- Pupils are pleasant, polite and play well together. They are taught how to stay safe in a wide range of circumstances, including using the internet. They are keen to take on leadership roles such as 'e-cadets'; pupils who help to teach their class about internet safety.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve. However, a small number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are often absent from school and missing out on the good education that the school provides.
- Children in early years are making secure progress. Interesting activities inspire children to talk about their work so they develop good language skills quickly. There are many opportunities for reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, boys have made rapid gains in their writing skills because of good teaching and support. Children are very confident and enjoy showing their work to adults. They cooperate well together and are happy and well cared for.
- Governors are astute and clear about the strengths and areas for development in the school. They are well informed and visit the school regularly. They are highly skilled, some in education and finance, and hold leaders and staff to account for the work they do. Some are new to their role and are beginning to contribute well under the guidance of the chair of governors.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use questioning skilfully to check the learning of all pupils
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling is checked swiftly in class to strengthen writing further

- boys' writing is of consistently high quality throughout key stage 2
- regular attendance is strengthened for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

James McGrath
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I held a separate meeting with a representative of the local authority. I conducted an analysis of pupils' writing and comprehension work with the leader of English. I observed a range of teaching and listened to pupils reading in each class. I spoke to pupils throughout the day about their safety and learning in school. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I analysed five staff questionnaires along with 42 parents' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). I looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. I considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

I agreed to prioritise the following areas with you at the start of the inspection: the effectiveness of leaders and managers in addressing the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report, provision in early years to strengthen boys' writing skills, and how effectively the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used.