

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



31 March 2017

Mrs Veronique Singer
Headteacher
Radipole Primary School
Radipole Lane
Weymouth
Dorset
DT3 5HS

Dear Mrs Singer

Short inspection of Radipole Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 January 2013.

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 a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the aspects that require further work. You have built an effective leadership team around you. You have secured training for your leaders and enabled them to work with other schools. As a result, senior and middle leaders make a valuable contribution to school life and have a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement across the school. Together, you are working on the right aspects for improvement.

Governors play an active role. They plan visits and check the impact of school improvement initiatives by collecting evidence for themselves. For example, link governors review pupils' books and talk with pupils regularly. Governors' challenge ensures that targets and milestones on the school improvement plan take high priority in your daily work and are carried out effectively. Increasingly, they hold leaders to account well.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve teachers' questioning so that pupils have more chance to discuss and clarify their learning. Your work in this regard is highly effective. I found that pupils are actively encouraged to discuss their work and this helps them deepen their understanding. The dialogue between pupils about the texts they read is particularly impressive. The school's recent focus on improving reading comprehension across the school is taking hold well. As a result of staff training, there is now greater consistency of the teaching of reading

across classes and year groups and this is improving pupils' outcomes.

You were also asked to ensure that pupils know exactly what they are learning and that pupils respond to the guidance that teachers give them to improve their work. This aspect is now secure. Pupils talk with clarity about the purpose of the activities they complete because the learning focus is consistently explained by teachers. As a result, pupils know what they are learning and are clear about their next steps for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Those leaders who are responsible for safeguarding make timely referrals and actively engage with external agencies to minimise children's risk of harm.

Staff and governors have completed relevant and up-to-date training in line with current legislation. They articulate with confidence what to do if they have concerns.

Governors' spot checks go well beyond checking the single central record and staff vetting checks. The safeguarding governor talks with pupils and staff to check that safeguarding systems and procedures are embedded in the working life of the school. As a result, safeguarding is everyone's business and there is a whole-school coordinated response to minimise risk.

The arrangements to keep children safe are fit for purpose and detailed records are kept.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, a key line of enquiry focused on the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school, particularly in writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is because disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than other pupils in this area.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in writing across the school. Staff training has been effective in improving teachers' subject knowledge of grammar. Discrete teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar has enabled these pupils to make good and often rapid progress. As a result, pupils achieve well and work in their writing books is improving quickly. There remains a difference between disadvantaged pupils' achievement in writing and the achievement of others. However, this is diminishing because of the good teaching these pupils receive.
- Pupils told me that they are improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar and this is helping them become more established writers. However, they also said that they prefer mathematics to writing. They would like greater opportunity to write across the curriculum and make the writing curriculum more exciting. I agree. Pupils' writing in topic books is not as strong as that seen in their English

books. Activities to write across a range of subjects are not sufficiently challenging.

- Another key line of enquiry focused on whether previously low- and middle-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now able to apply their phonics to their writing and are catching up in Year 2.
- Teachers use robust assessments well to secure improved achievement in writing. Specific targeted teaching is enabling these pupils in Year 2 to catch up. The high priority placed on teaching spelling and grammar is paying dividends. Consequently, pupils' application of phonics and spelling is good. For example, those pupils who failed to meet the expected standard in writing at the end of early years, and those who failed to meet expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening test, are now making good progress. As a result, pupils write with greater confidence and stamina, and with increasing accuracy in punctuation, phonics and spelling.
- I also looked at the progress that the most able pupils and middle-attaining pupils make in mathematics and writing to establish the proportion of pupils who are exceeding expected standards across the school this year.
- Pupils enjoy their mathematics work. The focus this year on reasoning and problem-solving is developing well. This results in pupils having greater exposure to more challenging work. As a result, middle-attaining and the most able pupils are making good progress in mathematics and a growing number of pupils are working towards exceeding expected standards.
- Middle-attaining pupils are making good progress and working at expected standards in writing. However, some of these pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This hinders their ability to progress to working at the highest standards in writing. Many of the most able pupils are making good progress. However, you rightly identify that further challenge is required in lower key stage 2 because some inconsistencies in pupils' progress remain.
- My final line of enquiry was about how well leaders, including governors, check the attendance and the progress of pupils across the school. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been too low in the past.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average overall. However, absence is slightly higher for disadvantaged pupils than others. Leaders track this robustly and follow up any concerns quickly. As a result, the differences in attendance levels between disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing steadily.
- Leaders' checks on teaching are comprehensive. Workbooks are scrutinised regularly and short-term actions given to staff to improve the progress of pupils who need to catch up. Governors also visit the school and meet with subject leaders and review pupils' progress in books. This ongoing dialogue between subject leaders and link governors enables governors to collect evidence for themselves and establish progress against the school improvement plan. Governors' monitoring of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is effective and results in these pupils making good progress.
- Senior leaders effectively track the progress of specific groups of pupils, for instance boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, leaders can show that progress over time is good. However, previously middle-attaining pupils are not monitored as robustly as some groups of pupils. Consequently, some of these pupils could be challenged even further so that a greater proportion of them make rapid progress to exceed expected standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- checks on pupils' progress are measured from their starting points so that rates of challenge are increased for the middle-ability and the most able pupils and a greater proportion of these pupils exceed the expected standards in writing
- writing across a wide range of subjects is improved so that the writing seen in topic books is consistently of the same high standard as seen in English books.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you, senior and middle leaders and a group of governors. I also had a telephone discussion with representatives from the local authority and met with your school improvement adviser. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I talked with groups of pupils to gather their views of the school.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, school performance information and attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 258 responses to the Parent View online survey, 17 responses to the staff survey and 80 responses to the pupil survey.