

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



26 April 2017

Mr Jon Hopkins  
Headteacher  
Fallings Park Primary School  
Old Fallings Lane  
Low Hill  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV10 8BN

Dear Mr Hopkins

### **Short inspection of Fallings Park Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 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 November 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 and your deputy headteacher provide effective and strong leadership. The overwhelmingly positive responses to the staff questionnaire show that staff morale is good.

As a result of your strong leadership and commitment, the school has continued to develop and thrive since the last inspection. During this time, you have also effectively managed an expansion plan for the school which has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of pupils in the school. There is clear evidence that, together, you and your team are making a significant difference to the lives of your pupils.

As a leadership team, you know the school, the pupils and the community in which they live, extremely well. You strive to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education in a calm and nurturing environment. A strength of the school is the quality of care, guidance and support you provide for your pupils, and for parents and carers. A culture of staff working together, along with other agencies, provides pupils with the necessary support to move their learning on. Family learning provides parents with helpful guidance. I saw evidence of this on my visit where parents, carers and staff were making Easter bonnets with the youngest pupils. Views of parents are positive. As one parent put it, 'I am proud to be part of Fallings Park.'

Pupils behave well in the school, both in lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils seen in lessons during the inspection were keen to participate and confident to talk to me about their learning. This was confirmed in my conversations with pupils and the views of the overwhelming majority of parents.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to raise achievement and improve teaching. Well-devised training, coaching and mentoring have been successful in maintaining good and effective teaching and developing other leaders in the school. Collaborative work with local schools, through a peer-to-peer review, has also supported the improvements in teaching and learning. For example, the outcomes from the most recent national phonics screening check confirm these improvements, as the large majority of pupils in Year 1 achieved the required standard. In 2016, the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils made good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. During the inspection, I noticed that there has been a focus on writing and the improvements in this area were evident in the good standard and range of types of writing displayed throughout the school.

You accurately identify where improvements need to be made and swiftly implement the necessary steps to tackle any weaknesses. For example, you are fully aware that further improvements need to be made for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, to ensure that they make the best possible progress. You have identified pupils' use of mathematical language and reasoning in mathematics as an area of focus across the school. In addition, you are striving to ensure that children who enter the Reception class with skills that are well below those normally expected have support to help them to work towards attaining a good level of development. You are very aware that, although improving, the attendance of pupils who do not attend school regularly is a key priority for the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors place a high priority on the safeguarding of pupils. Staff and governors receive high-quality safeguarding training to keep them informed of all types of risk to children. This training enables staff to quickly spot concerns and take rapid action if needed. Staff rigorously implement and adhere to safeguarding policies and procedures. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding documents, processes and procedures are fit for purpose and successfully implemented. Records are detailed and of a high quality.

All the pupils who spoke to me at breaktimes told me that they feel very safe in school. They are confident that they can share any concerns or worries they may have with a member of staff. They comment that their school is a safe and happy place where they are looked after well. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying. They are confident that any minor disputes will be quickly resolved by staff. Pupils have a clear understanding of keeping safe, including in the use of the internet and mobile phones. Nearly all parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire agreed that their children were safe, happy and well looked after at the school.

## Inspection findings

- Senior leaders, through accurate evaluation, know precisely which areas need to improve. In particular, you know that, although you have quickly put actions in place, there is more work to be done to ensure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make stronger progress. At times, the tasks set for them are not challenging enough and the questions posed by teachers do not always expect pupils to think harder. Consequently, over time, this reduces their opportunities to master more challenging work and to reach the higher standards.
- Effective teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2 in 2016, pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which represents good progress from their starting points. You were able to demonstrate that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was higher than that achieved by pupils nationally in reading and writing, and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. Progress by the end of key stage 2 has improved over time. In reading and writing, the progress made by pupils was above the national average in 2016. Pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with that of most pupils nationally, although middle-attaining and disadvantaged pupils made the least progress.
- Teaching and assessment have improved well since the last inspection. You are tracking the progress of different group of pupils closely, including the progress of middle-attaining pupils in mathematics. You have accurately identified that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, need to be supported to further develop the acquisition of language skills to enable them to reason mathematically and deepen their thinking.
- The focus on improving writing since the last inspection has been successful. Pupils develop a consistent writing style with accurate form and structure. The quality and range of writing on display around the school show that pupils achieve well in writing in a range of subject areas.
- In early years, teachers provide stimulating and varied indoor and outdoor activities. These encourage children to talk, role play and experiment with practical resources to improve their language and mathematical skills. Children in Reception enjoy trying out their writing skills independently. The effective teaching of phonics enables children to identify letters and to sound them out while forming and writing letters. Children start school with skills and abilities that are typically well below those that would normally be expected. The effective support that children receive enables them to make good progress. The early years leader and staff have put actions in place and are working hard to enable children, and in particular boys and disadvantaged pupils, who enter school at a very low level, to catch up.

- Staff are excellent role models to pupils. They help create a caring and considerate community. Leaders have created an inclusive ethos in the school, where everyone is valued. This is a friendly and happy school in which to work and play. The warm welcome starts on arrival at the school from the staff who work in the office. Pupils feel that they can approach any member of staff to help and support them in times of difficulty.
- Leaders have identified improving attendance as a high priority for the school. The school works closely and promptly with parents and outside agencies when pupils are absent from school, particularly those pupils who are regularly absent. For example, phone calls are made to parents when staff are first alerted to absence. The 'walking bus' and breakfast club are two strategies that have had a positive impact on punctuality and attendance. However, leaders know that they need to continue to work hard with some families to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.
- There have been no exclusions in the last three years. This is because staff carefully manage behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Governors have a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because governors receive a wide range of information from leaders and they interpret this information astutely before challenging and supporting school leaders.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are suitably challenged to enable them to reach their potential
- the focus on improving the attendance of those pupils who do not attend school regularly continues and rapidly reduces the number of absences for these pupils
- the acquisition of pupils' language skills is developed to enable them to reason mathematically and deepen their thinking.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Somers  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and your early years leader. We talked about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. Together, we visited lessons and looked at some books. I also held discussions with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and talked to pupils. I had a conversation with an officer from the local authority. A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account the 79 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and considered additional comments received from parents. I also looked at 45 staff questionnaires.