

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 September 2017

Mrs Amanda Defty
Headteacher
Lambton Primary School
Caradoc Close
Lambton Village
Washington
Tyne and Wear
NE38 0PL

Dear Mrs Defty

Short inspection of Lambton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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 outstanding in September 2008.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The inspiration you bring as headteacher has fostered a culture of high expectations, where potential barriers to learning are addressed and a 'can do' approach informs every action. Leadership is the responsibility of all staff, and you have created a skilful and highly effective team of senior leaders. You are supported exceptionally well by an equally skilled and effective deputy headteacher. The whole-school ethos is one of raising aspiration for all and is underpinned by a dogged determination to eradicate second best. It is easy to see why the school's motto, 'Believe to Achieve', is so apt.

Leaders expect the very best from all adults in school and, as a result, teaching, learning and assessment are of high quality. Teachers routinely establish high expectations. They accept no excuses for failure and work collaboratively to address issues that arise. You, the deputy headteacher, governors and other school leaders keep a very close eye on the quality of teaching, undertaking monitoring of teachers' planning for lessons and analysing work in pupils' books. You hold discussions with pupils about their learning and also spend time visiting classes to observe teaching and learning. You have recently introduced a new system to track the rates of progress that pupils, and groups of pupils, make in their learning, and the standards they achieve. This is another example of your ambition to constantly improve the effectiveness of every school system and procedure.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff and this is seen in their exemplary attitudes to learning in lessons. They produce an impressive quality of work and behave impeccably around school. Pupils' strong relationships with adults remain a key strength of your highly inclusive school. Pupils develop excellent citizenship skills, being keen to take on responsibilities through roles such as being a member of the school council, a 'happy to help' buddy, or a 'travel ambassador'. They take great pride in the well-ordered and extremely tidy school environment both inside and outside, benefiting from high-quality displays in classrooms and shared areas. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school remains exemplary and the vast majority are very eager to work hard.

You and the deputy headteacher have worked diligently to develop a curriculum that meets the specific needs of your pupils, and fires their interest through visits to important sites across the region, such as Hartlepool Historic Quay, Saint Mary's Heritage Centre on the River Tyne at Gateshead, Jarrow Hall and a Roman fort. Leaders' ambition to constantly strive for further improvements is reflected in the recent review of the school's curriculum to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop age-appropriate, subject-specific skills and to consolidate their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics in their topic work.

Safeguarding is effective.

In your role as designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that policies, procedures and records are of high quality and up to date. Effective use is made by all staff of widely available forms to report any concerns regarding specific pupils, providing you with detailed information on any potential issue relating to children's welfare. Your determination to leave no stone unturned in your duty to keep pupils safe is exemplified by your desire to further improve systems by introducing an even more comprehensive online system for raising and reporting concerns. The school is used by the local authority as a beacon of good practice in safeguarding.

All staff are appropriately trained and have access to well-written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding. Pupils are very knowledgeable about bullying and e-safety. They understand how to avoid situations that may prove dangerous when not at school.

Inspection findings

- You have ensured that the school continues to work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. The strong relationships in school and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, caring, considerate and friendly to each other and to visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together. The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is of an extremely high quality.

- Pupils enjoy their learning, and the vast majority work conscientiously. They have a clear understanding of which aspects of behaviour help them to learn, and which behaviours get in the way. In classrooms, pupils listen to adults attentively, and respond immediately and without fuss to instructions. They collaborate with peers when asked, and drive themselves to complete tasks and challenges on time. Lessons proceed in a calm and studious atmosphere that is highly conducive to learning.
- You have ensured that there is now an improved and consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. This followed careful consideration of the gaps in pupils' knowledge following the disappointing outcomes of the key stage 2 statutory mathematics assessment in 2016. Improved teachers' subject knowledge, a progressive approach to the teaching of number and fluency in calculation, and a strong emphasis on allowing pupils to develop and consolidate in their ability to reason and solve complex problems have accelerated pupils' progress. For example, in Year 5, pupils were able to match two-dimensional shapes to their properties, but then explain the similarities and differences between two quadrilaterals. In Year 3, pupils were successfully identifying equivalent fractions using fraction charts, and in Year 1, pupils solved missing number problems using practical apparatus such as number lines and counters on grids.
- Pupils are making consistently strong progress in their learning in mathematics in every year group in school. At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017 has risen from the previous year. Based on provisional data, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017 at the end of key stage 2 is now well above that found nationally. Pupils' rates of progress have also increased. A much larger proportion of pupils attained a high score compared with last year.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of the work and behaviours expected of pupils. They believe that all pupils should aspire to achieve their best. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils currently in the school are achieving very well in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and structure learning effectively. Work is set which is appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils. This allows all pupils to continue to make strong progress in their learning.
- The school's accurate and highly detailed system for tracking the progress of pupils shows that the vast majority of pupils in most year groups are on track to reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is substantiated by the high-quality work seen during the inspection in pupils' books. All groups of pupils make similarly strong progress and attain highly, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and boys and girls.

- School leaders, staff and governors, whom you lead exceptionally well, share an absolute conviction and passion for ensuring that all pupils achieve well, regardless of their background or ability. Working together collegiately, leaders and governors aspire to ensure that all staff and pupils succeed. Staff and leaders at all levels work tirelessly to solve problems and make continuous improvements, with teamwork being the catalyst for change. Where concerns or difficulties arise, they focus on implementing and sustaining improvements.
- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share your passion and commitment and those of senior leaders. Governors receive high-quality information, are linked to different key aspects of the school, and are involved alongside leaders in monitoring activities. They are extremely proud of the school's achievements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- agreed whole-school initiatives and actions relating to further improving the quality of teaching continue to impact positively on outcomes for pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the school business manager. You, the deputy headteacher and I visited lessons in each key stage. I met with the chair of the governing body, and other governors and the school's improvement partner. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I listened to some pupils read and looked in workbooks when in lessons. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, and the school's monitoring of its own performance and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in the 2017 statutory assessments, responses to the school's own questionnaire for parents earlier this year and the school's website.