

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 February 2018

Sarah Nisbett
Headteacher
Ducklington Primary School
Aston Road
Ducklington
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX29 7US

Dear Ms Nisbett

Short inspection of Ducklington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018, 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Your strong leadership has ensured that Ducklington Primary School has continued to improve since its last inspection. You have galvanised a determined team which shares your commitment to ensure that all pupils achieve well. You share responsibilities well across your senior leadership team. All leaders understand clearly their roles and have a good understanding of what the school does well, and what could be even better. Governors are particularly effective in monitoring leaders' actions against the school development plan. They bring the right balance of support and challenge and are committed to being your 'critical friend'. As a result of leaders' successful actions, the good quality of education in the school has been maintained since the last inspection.

Children say they love coming to school at Ducklington. They say they enjoy the lessons because they are 'challenging and fun' and that 'teachers make learning exciting'. One pupil commented: 'If we ever find things too easy, we get given another, more difficult challenge. It helps build our confidence.' Pupils say they particularly enjoy the creative opportunities provided, such as singing and drama, stating categorically that 'Our school plays are the best!'

Importantly, nearly all pupils say they feel safe at school. They say that if ever they have a disagreement or fall out with their friends, teachers are there to help them. They say that bullying rarely happens and that 'Ducklington is a kind school where we all look after each other.' They state that teachers always listen to what they have to say and are always there to help them when needed.

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. Many expressed their delight in how happy and content their children are at Ducklington. One comment, typical of many, stated: 'It's such a lovely school! A great headteacher, brilliant facilities, and amazing teachers.' The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents.

Leaders have tackled successfully the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve across the curriculum. Learning is planned well and enables pupils to work independently and use their initiative. A good example of this is your ongoing work in developing pupils' business and enterprise skills, such as taking responsibility for producing their school plays and running the 'box office'. Teachers use assessment well throughout lessons to understand what pupils do, and do not, know. They use this to adapt their teaching well. Finally, your work to develop the teaching of mathematics, particularly for the most able, has seen a significant rise in outcomes for pupils in this subject.

Most current pupils are achieving well across the curriculum. You monitor teaching and learning effectively and ensure that senior leaders and teachers work closely to improve pupils' outcomes. For instance, the small number of disadvantaged pupils are supported ably to make good progress from their starting points. You are rightly focusing on improving some pupils' attainment in writing to ensure that they achieve as highly as they can. You are also aware that some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are not achieving as well as they should in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong safeguarding culture that emanates throughout the school. When employing new staff, you ensure that stringent checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children. This information is recorded accurately on the school's single central record. All safeguarding systems meet statutory guidance.

You provide a wealth of relevant safeguarding training for staff. For instance, your induction programme covers important information on how to spot child protection concerns and pupils who might be at risk of harm. Importantly, you check staff members' safeguarding knowledge and provide additional training if needed. Your diligence ensures that everyone is aware of the actions to take to keep children safe.

Pupils know how to manage risks to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils shared how important it is to protect their identity when using social media. They know they have to keep their online passwords secret and that if they see something on the internet that worries them, they must tell a trusted adult immediately.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on how effectively leaders ensure that pupils achieve well in reading and writing. We also scrutinised leaders' actions to ensure that more children are challenged to achieve at the highest standards in mathematics. Finally, we evaluated leaders' work in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- You ensure that most pupils develop the necessary skills to write effectively. For instance, throughout the school, we saw pupils using and developing well their ability to use good grammar and punctuation to improve their work. However, a few pupils are not yet achieving as strongly as they can in writing. You are addressing this well, but your work has not yet impacted fully on these pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils, particularly in key stage 1, read well and show great enthusiasm for books. This is because, for instance, you enrich learning across the curriculum with high-quality texts. Younger pupils particularly enjoy the range of strategies that encourage them to read more widely at home. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not show the same level of enthusiasm for reading. More can be achieved to instil a love of reading for these pupils across a range of different authors and genres.
- Mathematics learning is suitably challenging throughout the school. Teachers adapt lessons consistently well to provide a range of stimulating and increasingly more difficult work for pupils to complete. As a result, pupils rise to the challenge and work diligently to stretch themselves to work at the highest levels in mathematics.
- Teachers plan careful mathematics investigations that challenge pupils to excel. For instance, in Year 3, pupils were devising their own fractions problems for their classmates to complete. The most able pupils grappled successfully with the more difficult questions, explaining how to complete the tricky tasks to their peers.
- You provide highly successful spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for pupils. This is demonstrated in the tolerance and respect they demonstrate for themselves and others. Pupils throughout the school know that it is wrong to discriminate against anyone because of the colour of their skin, their religion or faith, or their sexual orientation.
- Pupils revel in the many opportunities leaders and staff provide to develop their social development. For instance, pupils gain significant joy in raising money for charities. They enthuse about representing the school in competitive sports and activities. Pupils' efforts in working together, volunteering and cooperating with each other equip them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement in writing continues to rise
- pupils, particularly in key stage 2, develop further their emerging love of reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you, I visited lessons across the school. I spoke to pupils and examined work in their exercise books. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, and the deputy headteacher. I met with four members of the governing body. I took into account 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including written responses. I also analysed 82 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, and 17 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. A range of documents was reviewed, including: the school's development plan; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; the school's single central record of recruitment checks made on staff; information about pupils' achievement; records of pupils' behaviour and attendance; and minutes of governing body meetings.