

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



11 April 2018

Mrs Tracy Solman  
Headteacher  
Penny Acres Primary School  
The Common  
Holmesfield  
Dronfield  
Derbyshire  
S18 7WP

Dear Mrs Solman

### **Short inspection of Penny Acres Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 January 2014.

#### **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 the staff have successfully achieved the aim of Penny Acres being 'A happy school where children thrive'. Pupils work hard in a safe, stimulating environment and a harmonious atmosphere. Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils told me they enjoy school and feel happy and safe. Teachers ensure that learning activities are interesting and offer pupils a good level of challenge. For example, pupils in Year 6 were successfully exploring the properties of complex 3D shapes and pupils in Year 3 were enjoying the challenge of investigating the relationship between the perimeter and area of different shapes.

Pupils behave very well. They told me that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are confident that adults sort out any disagreements quickly and fairly. Pupils also stated that there are adults at the school to whom they could turn if they were worried about something. Parental views are very positive. All responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire stated that their children were safe and happy. One parent told me: 'The teachers here genuinely care.' Another commented: 'Both my children absolutely love it here; I can't keep them away!'

The governing body formed in September 2017 when the school federated with nearby Wigley Primary School. Individual governors make visits to the school in

order to check on the progress of the school development plan and talk to pupils about their work. Findings from these visits are reported to governors at meetings, therefore ensuring that the governing body is kept up to date. The new governing body have undergone some relevant training to ensure that they are able to hold you to account. However, the governors told me they would like further training in areas such as fully understanding pupils' outcomes. We therefore agreed that this would be a next step for the school and in the governors' development.

Teachers accurately assess pupils and track their progress frequently in reading, writing, mathematics and some foundation subjects using an online system. However, we discovered that some of the assessment information generated by this system is not accurate and does not match with the work we saw in pupils' books. The assessment system is painting a far more negative picture than is actually the case. As a result, you are to ensure that the system provides you and the governing body with a more accurate analysis of pupils' strengths and development areas.

Recent outcomes for pupils leaving the school have been good. For example, in 2017, pupils' progress from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was in the top 1% of schools nationally for reading and mathematics. In 2017, the proportion of pupils leaving key stage 1 who achieved the expected standard in reading was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion who achieved the expected standard in writing and mathematics was above the national average. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been well above the national average. Similarly, in recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years has been above the national average.

You have successfully addressed the improvement areas identified in the previous inspection report. For example, teachers are now consistently following the school's feedback policy and the school improvement plan contains measurable targets. Consequently, the governing body can successfully evaluate any actions you take.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The online system is effective in enabling all staff to record any welfare concerns they have regarding a pupil. You and the other designated lead diligently follow up any concerns raised by staff. You contact outside agencies swiftly should a pupil or family require extra support. You and the staff have received appropriate safeguarding training, including recognising the signs of abuse and keeping pupils safe when they are online. Staff have recently undertaken defibrillator training and paediatric first aid qualifications.

You ensure that all staff and volunteers undertake rigorous checks before they start to work or volunteer at the school. The knowledgeable bursar ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The safeguarding governor checks these records frequently.

## Inspection findings

- You have rightly identified that pupils recently leaving key stage 2 made less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. As a result, teachers have undertaken training in the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. There have also been improvements in pupils' handwriting and presentation. However, we agreed that teachers do not provide pupils with frequent enough opportunities to practise these skills in extended pieces of writing across the curriculum. This is therefore a next step for the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. This is because assessments are frequent and lead to appropriate and stimulating activities. For example, I observed children deepening their mathematical vocabulary of capacity by exploring when objects were full, nearly full, half-full, nearly empty and empty. Transition arrangements before children start in the Reception class are strong. The early years leader visits children in their nursery settings and there are opportunities for children to visit the school in the summer term. Consequently, staff have a good understanding of a child's ability before they start at the school. There are good links with outside agencies, including the speech and language and visual impairment teams. As a result, children receive any required extra support swiftly.
- There are strong links in place between Penny Acres and other local schools. The 'Dronfield cluster' meetings ensure that staff can share good practice in, for example, key subject areas and the early years. They also provide opportunities for teachers to check the accuracy of assessments by moderating pupils' work.
- There is an effective system in place to monitor pupils' absence and persistent absence. Current attendance information suggests that rates of absence and persistent absence are below national averages. The educational welfare officer is effective in working with pupils and families whose attendance may be a concern.
- You enrich the curriculum for pupils by organising frequent educational visits. Recent examples of deepening pupils' understanding of history include trips to a Second World War camp and to Liverpool to see the terracotta warriors. Pupils have also recently benefited from residential visits to the Isle of White and France.
- You have received effective support from the local authority-brokered school improvement partner. He has worked with you on the latest school development plan, the school's self-evaluation and the initial training provided to the new governing body.

## Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's online assessment system provides accurate information regarding the progress and attainment of pupils
- teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to practise spelling,

punctuation and grammar skills in extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English

- the new governing body continue to receive appropriate training in order that they can effectively hold leaders to account for their actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, two teachers, two support staff, three governors, including the chair, and the school improvement partner. I visited all classrooms with you and examined a range of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and during a group discussion. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, during lunchtime and in lessons.

I took into account the 19 responses to both Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and to Ofsted's free-text service. I spoke with a number of parents and carers at the start of the school day. There were 33 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey which were also considered. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the latest assessment information, a summary of the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan, records of meetings of the governing body, and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.