

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



2 May 2018

Mr Ken Jennings  
Acting Headteacher  
Greenhill Primary School  
Gamble Hill Drive  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS13 4JJ

Dear Mr Jennings

### **Short inspection of Greenhill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the substantive deputy headteacher, you have ably stepped up to the role of acting headteacher since January 2018, a role you will continue until the new headteacher takes up her post in September. The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing and leadership since the last inspection. You are accurate in your view that, while pupils make average progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout their time in school, this needs to be more rapid from their low starting points so that more pupils leave school having reached national age-related expectations. In 2017, Year 6 results showed some improvement, and pupils' current work shows that this improvement continues, particularly in the proportion of pupils who are now working at higher standards.

Most senior and middle leadership team members are relatively new to their roles. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and bring a shared vision and positive mindset to tackle any weaknesses. Consequently, there is an increased capacity for improvement.

Governance, too, has been strengthened. Governors have worked hard to improve their own knowledge and skills so that they can provide effective support and challenge you about any aspects of the school that are not strong enough. They have a very good understanding of what is working well and where priorities lie for improvement. This is because they are astute in their interpretation of new school assessment information. Governors agree that focused plans and actions for

improvement are relatively new. However, their good understanding of the position of the school and their varied skills and experiences further increase the capacity for school improvement.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress in reading was stronger than it was in other subjects. The teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2 was not as effective. During my visit, I wanted to explore how well the school teaches pupils to read. Although pupils' progress has been generally average over recent years, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading was in the lowest 20% of pupils nationally in 2016 and 2017. While the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard has improved in this time, you know that this rate of improvement needs to be more rapid. You have identified achievement in reading as the number one priority for the school and have strategies in place to improve pupils' reading fluency and understanding.

You and your team have rightly given high priority to getting the development of literacy skills right in the early years. Recent work to improve the quality of provision and teaching in the early years is paying off. Children make a good start in phonics in Nursery. The highly organised Nursery and Reception environments, inside and outdoors, are rich in opportunities for pupils to explore and develop their early literacy skills. For example, after a phonics lesson where children learned the sound 'ch', they were able to practise writing 'ch' in areas inside and outside. One child proudly brought her tray of playdough chick models to show me, complete with her written labels of 'mummy', 'daddy' and 'chick'.

This year, leaders and staff have worked hard to ensure that there is a much stronger link between Reception and Year 1. Teachers and teaching assistants in Year 1 have high expectations of what pupils can do. They help pupils build swiftly on their reading and writing skills from Reception, picking up on any misconceptions quickly so that they can make the best possible start to key stage 1.

Reading books are well matched to each child's reading ability and early books are phonics based, even though they are not always specifically matched to the sounds just learned. This enables most children to develop confidence and fluency in their reading. Those pupils who have not had this good grounding in phonics and are now in lower key stage 2 are less confident about reading aloud. The challenge they have in trying to read and understand words and vocabulary slows down their comprehension of the text overall. In addition, although teaching for most pupils is systematic and sounds are well modelled orally and in writing, the lowest-ability pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, do not have access to this same quality of teaching. They do not build up their knowledge of sounds efficiently and the progress they make is slow.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils. These are well understood by staff. Records are fit for purpose. Leaders keep records of any concerns raised, as well as records of their actions and responses. For example,

concerns about site security were discussed with all leaders, including governors and the local authority, and new electric gates were being installed on the day of my visit.

Pupils can explain a variety of ways that they are taught to keep safe. These include learning about online safety, 'stranger danger' discussions at age-appropriate levels, and finding out about 'places you should go to and places you shouldn't go to'. Pupils say that they have regular lessons in personal, social and health education that help them to 'make sensible decisions' and speak to adults they know well if they need to. They explain that the school sends home letters about 'things we and our parents need to look out for or take special care with'.

In conversations with pupils, and in their responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire, they said that some pupils do not behave as well as they should sometimes, but that adults usually step in quickly to help them, so that others can carry on with their work. Those I spoke to said that they had not been bullied themselves, but that they talked about it in school and knew what to do if they had a concern.

## **Inspection findings**

- You, your leaders and the school's governors are very aware of the steady decline in attendance that has taken place over previous years. A number of strategies have been put in place to address this issue. A pupil and family support officer works with pupils and their families around issues of welfare, behaviour and attendance. There is a large number of rewards for good attendance on offer, including incentives for parents and carers to support their children in attending school regularly, which includes a regular prize draw for supermarket vouchers. Where pupils' attendance is low, you hold meetings with parents to plan how they can better support getting their child to school every day, and in understanding the importance of this. This is particularly focused on supporting those pupils who are persistently absent from school. As a result of these actions, attendance has improved this year so far. Current figures show absence overall of 4.1%. This is an improvement on the 4.7% absence rate in the same period last year, and 4.6% in 2015/16. You are aware that there is still work to be done to reduce absence further, particularly with families.
- You and other members of the leadership team have reviewed and improved the school's assessment systems to raise the bar on the expectations of pupils' achievement. You have placed a much greater emphasis on relating pupils' progress to their starting points on entry to the school, not just the start of the year they are currently in. You have also given teachers more responsibility and accountability for the assessments of the pupils in their class and the actions they are taking to address any issues these raise. This new approach is still in its early stages, but there is already a much better understanding of the progress pupils are making over their time in school. You have accurately identified that, in some cases, teachers are tending to be overcautious with mid-year assessments. You and your team are working on using other information, such as work in pupils' books, to check this difference out. You know that you will need to support

teachers in developing confidence in making accurate assessments across subjects.

- Most parents are confident in how the school supports and cares for their child. They say that communication between home and school has improved this year and that the school has effectively addressed any concerns they have had. However, some parents have concerns about the support that their children have received in the past for their SEN and/or disabilities. Although the school has responded to these concerns, and acknowledged and addressed the areas where they believe their practice can improve, you, your leaders and governors are eager to work with parents to address specific concerns, so that the very best possible outcomes can be achieved for their children.
- The lead teacher for English works in partnership with the lead teacher for spelling and phase leaders to make sure that actions for improvement in reading, writing and spelling have a high profile across the school. The lead teacher for English is very positive about how the local authority cluster training has helped teachers to develop pupils' reading comprehension, and rightly so: this is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence, enjoyment and skills. When speaking to older pupils, I was able to see the impact of this training. Pupils were animated and keen to tell me not only about the comparisons they were making between texts they had read, but also about how interested they were in the books being chosen. Pupils in upper key stage 2, in particular, have benefited from this teaching.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- close attention is given to supporting lower-ability pupils in making more rapid progress, particularly in reading, so that a higher proportion reach expected standards
- all pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are taught a programme of systematic synthetic phonics that is well matched to their needs and abilities
- teachers are supported in making accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, throughout the year and from pupils' different starting points
- they work with parents to improve pupils' attendance and continue to raise the profile of good attendance in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we spent time together in classrooms and looked at the quality of pupils' work. We discussed leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. We looked at the success of the actions that leaders have taken and are taking to bring about improvement. I held discussions with members of your governing body and had a separate meeting with the local authority school improvement adviser. I met with all phase leaders and leaders for English and spelling, as well as the school business manager and pupil and family support officer. I spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to pupils read. I took into account the 41 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as correspondence from parents that was sent to me on the day of the inspection. The responses from staff to the Ofsted questionnaires were also considered. I reviewed a number of school documents, including the written evaluation of the school's work, school assessment information, analyses of attendance, a range of policies, and safeguarding information.