

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 May 2018

Mrs Ruth Murad
Executive Principal
Montgomery Primary Academy
White Road
Sparkbrook
Birmingham
West Midlands
B11 1EH

Dear Mrs Murad

Short inspection of Montgomery Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2018 with Amarjit Cheema, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In fact, the school has strengthened its performance in many ways. You, the head of school and senior leadership team have continued to drive up standards and have very high expectations for both staff and pupils. As a result, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning, have above average levels of attendance and make strong progress, especially in mathematics and writing. You have also strengthened relationships with parents and carers, who now have regular opportunities to take part in workshops to find out more about their children's learning. The great majority of parents spoken to, and those who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, were very positive about the work of the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has entered into a federation with another school within the multi-academy trust. You, and many other leaders, work across both schools, benefiting from sharing knowledge and expertise.

You have tackled the areas identified for improvement by the previous inspection. Your approaches to the teaching of writing and mathematics are now well embedded. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised due to effective training and support. In mathematics, the level of challenge is appropriate for all abilities of pupils and they are encouraged to challenge themselves. As a result of a focus on reading, and the development of a high-

quality library, pupils now have regular access to books from a wide range of authors and genres.

Along with governors and other leaders, you have rightly identified the need to improve pupils' progress in reading and this is the key priority for everyone. Reading now has a high profile across the school and you have introduced new approaches to strengthen the quality of the teaching of reading. In-school information shows that these changes are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. However, more work needs to be done to embed these new approaches, particularly to improve how well pupils understand what they have read. There also remain some inconsistencies in teaching and teachers do not always give pupils opportunities to apply their reading skills independently, including the most able pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school. You have created a safeguarding team which ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils are well cared for at all times and they know that the adults in school are there to look after them. Pupils said that they are taught how to stay safe, for example when using the internet or travelling to and from school.

All staff have regular and appropriate training to help them understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any safeguarding concerns. You work with a wide range of external agencies and you are persistent in following up any concerns about pupils' welfare. You have a good understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the school. Governors understand their role in overseeing the effectiveness of safeguarding and monitor the effectiveness of school procedures.

Inspection findings

- Over the last 18 months, improving pupils' progress in reading has been, and continues to be, the school's main priority. A working party of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants researched best practice in this area and identified those strategies that they felt would be most effective for the pupils. They have provided appropriate training for staff, and together you regularly monitor and adjust these strategies as necessary. You have also changed the school's timetable to ensure that pupils have three opportunities to read each day.
- Developing a love of reading is central to this work and you have created a list of books that pupils should have the opportunity to read from Reception Year through to Year 6. The school has created a welcoming library and several reading 'nooks' around the school to encourage regular reading for pleasure. Pupils and their parents can access the library on a daily basis. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they enjoy reading and the wide selection of books available. However, not all pupils were able to talk about authors they like or why they had chosen a particular book.

- Phonics is taught systematically across the early years and Year 1. Daily sessions, and additional input from support staff, help to ensure that pupils' decoding skills are strong and that they are able to read age-appropriate texts fluently. The great majority of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- While pupils can read confidently, too often they do not fully understand what they have read. Teachers are addressing this concern by developing pupils' vocabulary and teaching them strategies to help them make sense of what they are reading. For example, pupils are encouraged to use clues in the text to help them work out the meaning of a word that they do not know. This approach is highly structured and focuses on ensuring that pupils are able to read at the level expected for their age. The school's own information shows that pupils are making more progress than they have in the past. However, the impact of these strategies remains variable and more time is needed to ensure that they are fully embedded.
- Teaching across the school is generally strong and effective. However, sometimes activities are too narrow or pupils are provided with too much support. As a result, some pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to think for themselves or to apply their skills independently. This can slow their progress. The most able pupils are sometimes expected to complete the same work as other pupils before moving on to more independent, challenging activities. This means that some learning time is lost.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the majority of disadvantaged pupils make progress that is in line with other pupils in school, and is similar to other pupils nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Your aim is to provide all pupils with 'masses of experiences' during their time in school in order to raise their aspirations and prepare them well for secondary school. To support all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, you have developed an exciting curriculum that includes regular visitors or trips and access to a range of specialist teaching such as art, music and physical education (PE). You have set up your own school radio station to help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The curriculum meets the needs of almost all pupils. When required, you take steps to personalise the curriculum to address individual pupils' specific needs. Subject leaders regularly assess and monitor the skills that pupils are developing. You ensure that approaches to planning are consistent across the school.
- You provide pupils with access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and a holiday club. All pupils are encouraged and supported to attend these clubs if they wish. During the inspection, pupils spoke excitedly about forthcoming residential trips. Older pupils talked proudly about their achievement in a debating competition and that they are looking forward to taking part in the national finals in London.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to drive forward and embed improvements in the teaching of reading, especially the development of pupils' comprehension skills
- pupils are able to apply their reading skills independently
- teachers routinely give the most able pupils appropriately challenging work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the Academies Enterprise Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my colleague and I met with you, the head of school, assistant headteachers and other members of staff. I spoke with a representative of the local governing body and the director of primary education representing the multi-academy trust. We talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils, both formally and informally.

We visited almost all classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. We scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

We took account of 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We also took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.