

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Simon Jones
Headteacher
Waterfoot Primary School
Wolfenden Green
Waterfoot
Rossendale
Lancashire
BB4 9DA

Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Waterfoot Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 good in July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have settled into your new school building, and have enhanced the facilities through a specialised art and design room, an orienteering course and attractive displays of pupils' work. Your school community is inclusive and welcoming. Governors are involved in the life of the school and know it well. You have high expectations for all pupils and work effectively to remove any barriers that they have to their learning. You are proud of the pupils. They are polite, friendly and confident. They demonstrate excellent behaviour, both in and out of lessons. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one parent commented: 'The headteacher and staff always work for what is best for the pupils.'

The staffing issues, which caused difficulty in key stage 1 last year, have now been resolved. Working closely with governors, you have established a more effective staffing structure, which puts the school in a good place to move forward. During this time, you have built capacity in school through developing the skills of all teachers and middle leaders. They are able to analyse information effectively, in order to plan next steps in learning for pupils across the curriculum. This means that you are able to identify the small groups of pupils who are not reaching the standards of which they are capable and provide focused support. Current information shows that pupils in key stage 1 are making better progress than in the past. However, this area remains a priority for the school.

You use information about pupils' progress well to identify the correct priorities for the school. Improvement plans include a series of activities to address the key issues, but it is not always clear how you will measure your success against set targets. Consequently, you, other leaders and governors are not easily able to evaluate the impact of your actions on pupils' learning.

At your last inspection, the previous inspector reported that the quality of teaching in the school could improve further. You have improved the quality of teaching through training and sharing good practice. Teachers also learn from the artists, musicians and sports coaches who come into school. Staff value the regular visits to other schools to share and discuss pupils' work. This has improved the accuracy of teachers' judgements when assessing how well pupils are doing.

The previous inspector also asked you to increase pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT). This is now an integral part of the curriculum. I saw older pupils using ICT for research purposes. The pupils with whom I spoke talked confidently about what they were doing. They said that they were encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for their learning. Your computing curriculum is inspiring. For example, pupils have opportunities to design, programme and make a three-dimensional printed chess set.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You provide regular training to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with current requirements. The members of staff who are responsible for safeguarding provide a personalised induction for new members of staff so that they are aware of how to keep pupils safe.

The school community values the importance of keeping pupils safe. If you are concerned about any aspect of a pupil's life, you contact their parents to find out more. When necessary, you liaise with other agencies to keep pupils safe. The pupils with whom I spoke, and those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, said that they feel safe. They said that there is occasional bullying, but it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils say that they can talk to and are listened to by adults. The vast majority of parents, who responded to Parent View, agree that pupils are kept safe at your school.

Inspection findings

- Last year you were disappointed that pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 were below national expectations, so you responded quickly to identify the reasons why. As a result, you have developed stronger practice for teaching and learning in mixed-ability classes across the school, ensuring that teachers challenge all pupils effectively. You provide additional focused teaching to support pupils who need extra support in reading, writing and mathematics. Current information shows that key stage 1 pupils are making good progress. I saw strong progress in pupils' workbooks.

- You correctly identified reading as a whole-school focus this year. Teachers now analyse information more carefully so that they can identify the specific aspects of reading where pupils need to improve. You provide training for teaching assistants, enabling them to deliver additional reading support more effectively. Parents value the reading workshops you provide because these enable parents to support their children at home. You employ a librarian to support pupils effectively in the library. Current information shows that the proportion of pupils who are reaching the standards expected for their age in reading is increasing across school.
- You provide comprehensive support for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers regularly check if pupils are falling behind with their learning or if they are unhappy about anything. You keep detailed records for individual pupils, highlighting any barriers to learning. You use additional funding effectively to support these pupils and as a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. You provide a wide range of support for pupils, including extra support in reading and mathematics, counselling, music lessons and sports. You make sure that each pupil achieves the best outcomes that they can.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. You and your staff have worked with parents and governors to devise a curriculum that joins up all aspects of learning, and includes memorable activities for pupils. Teachers provide activities, which engage and motivate pupils to learn well. I saw the breadth of the curriculum in the lessons I observed, in pupils' workbooks and in the displays of pupils' work around school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on recent improvements in key stage 1 so that more pupils achieve the standards expected for their age
- plans for improvement include measureable outcomes, so that they can evaluate the impact of their actions more effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Robinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher and other middle leaders. I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I had

a discussion with a representative from the local authority. I considered the 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I considered the feedback from the pupil and staff questionnaires. I visited classrooms with you, observing teaching and learning, and scrutinised pupils' work in books. I spoke to pupils informally in lessons and listened to pupils read. I examined a wide range of school documentation relating to school improvement planning, self-evaluation, pupils' outcomes and safeguarding.