

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 October 2018

Mr Sean Crosier
Headteacher
Greenhill Primary School
Mile Lane
Bury
Lancashire
BL8 2JH

Dear Mr Crosier

Short inspection of Greenhill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you joined the school as headteacher in September 2017 you have successfully developed an ambitious vision for the school which is shared by other school leaders, staff and governors. Staff morale is high and staff say that they are proud to work at Greenhill. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are highly supportive of the school. Many of them commented on the school's 'close-knit', community atmosphere and recognise that the school makes good provision for their children's academic and social development.

Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Their behaviour during lessons and breaktimes is consistently good. Pupils are attentive and settle quickly to their work. When they are asked to work cooperatively, pupils listen attentively to each other, respect their friends' ideas and confidently express their own opinions. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average rates of attendance and low levels of persistent absence.

The school provides pupils with a curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects and topics, and which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of core British values very effectively. Pupils have welcomed the introduction of more visits out of school to support their learning in different subjects. For example, some pupils spoke enthusiastically about visiting Chester as part of their learning about the Romans. Pupils are also pleased that there are more extra-curricular clubs available to them, including American football,

although the selection is still fairly small. While the curriculum is broad and pupils largely find it interesting, more work is needed to provide greater depth and challenge to the learning that takes place in subjects such as geography and science.

Your work to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report has been successful. There has been a year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics and writing at greater depth by the end of key stage 2. Provisional data for 2018 confirms that this upward trend is continuing. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum, such as when writing recounts in history. Subject leaders have improved their skills in checking on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas. You have made also good use of individual staff members' skills and subject knowledge when assigning subject leader roles. Subject leadership of English and mathematics is strong and standards continue to rise.

There is no sense, though, that you are content to rest on your laurels. You and your fellow leaders and governors appreciate that, although pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is typically above average, there is potential for pupils to achieve even more. You have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have put well-thought-out plans in place to continue to move the school forward.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and can describe how school leaders have made sure that their school site is safe and secure. They have no concerns about bullying in their school and say that staff look after them well if they are worried about anything. This positive view was confirmed by the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, almost all of whom said that their children were safe and well looked after in school.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff and governors to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. These checks are recorded diligently. Staff and governors receive regular training covering different aspects of safeguarding so that their knowledge of good practice is up to date. Staff understand the procedures to follow if they are worried about a pupil's welfare, and leaders ensure that any such concerns are followed up swiftly.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at the quality of teaching and learning in phonics, because results in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 had dipped alarmingly to be well below the national average.

- Leaders took immediate action to address this dip in outcomes in phonics. You made sure that staff received appropriate training, ensuring that there was much greater consistency in the approach to teaching phonics. Systems were introduced to keep a careful check on individual pupils' progress in phonics. Teaching was adjusted so that activities were at the level that matched pupils' needs. These measures proved highly successful, and unvalidated data for the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 shows that nine out of ten pupils reached the expected level. Inspection evidence confirmed that phonics teaching is typically well paced and engaging, and that it is well matched to pupils' needs. The group of pupils I heard read used their phonic knowledge confidently to help them tackle unfamiliar words and read with great enthusiasm.
- Leaders' recent work on promoting reading across the school, and developing pupils' reading skills has been successful, particularly within key stage 2. Reading is given a high profile in school and teachers use well-chosen texts as the basis of much of their teaching in English. They skilfully draw out challenging vocabulary, which many pupils then use in their own writing. Pupils respond well and talk enthusiastically about texts that they have read. Many pupils say that reading is their favourite subject in school.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at Greenhill is relatively small, but in recent years there has been a consistent gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. Leaders recognised the need to focus more closely on this group of pupils, and so the deputy headteacher took on the role of 'pupil premium champion', ably assisted by one of the governors.
- Unvalidated data for 2018 indicates that disadvantaged pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics had risen to be at least in line with that of other pupils nationally the previous year. The school's internal tracking also shows an overall improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school. This has been secured by leaders and teachers having a clearer focus on which pupils fall into this group, carefully checking on their progress and then ensuring that additional help is provided where it is needed. Pupil premium funding is also used effectively to make sure that disadvantaged pupils are able to access extra-curricular activities so that no pupil misses out on the opportunities the school provides.
- The final line of enquiry looked at the curriculum. The work that you initiated when you arrived at the school has ensured that pupils cover a full range of subjects. Educational visits and theme weeks, such as art week, further enhance and enrich the curriculum. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the breadth of pupils' learning is not matched by its depth. Too often, activities in subjects, such as history and religious education (RE), do not build upon pupils' prior learning or link effectively with future activities. As a result, progression in pupils' learning in many subjects is disjointed. For example, pupils regularly use maps in geography. However, the level of challenge and sophistication of activities involving maps does not build up sequentially, allowing pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in using maps over time. On

occasion, some teachers' expectations of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics are notably lower than in those core areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in subjects other than mathematics and English, there is clearer progression in how pupils' knowledge and skills are built up over time, so that the curriculum successfully deepens pupils' learning
- teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve across a wide range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Dixon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, other school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I met a group of staff and a group of pupils, and I heard a group of younger pupils read. I considered 77 responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted online questionnaire, including 'free-text' comments, seven responses to the pupils' questionnaire and 17 responses to the staff survey. I visited classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, and I looked at examples of pupils' work from a range of subjects and year groups. I also looked at documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.