

16 February 2018

Mrs Sarah Gilraine
Executive headteacher
The Fountains Primary School
Bitham Lane
Stretton
Burton-on-Trent
Staffordshire
DE13 0HB

Dear Mrs Gilraine

Short inspection of The Fountains Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2018 with Johanne Clifton, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the governors and senior leaders are highly committed to the school. Together, you have focused on improving standards of teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, you and your leadership team have implemented a system for checking the quality of teaching, which has included regular visits to classes, looking at books and meeting with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. Leaders have used this information to provide regular and good-quality feedback to teachers so that they can improve the quality of their work.

You have developed a comprehensive training programme for all staff to support improvements in the classroom. This has resulted in teachers providing more effective feedback to pupils, and pupils having a greater understanding of how to assess their own work. Another example is through the training of staff to use signs and symbols with pupils who have complex learning needs. While this is having a positive impact, it is not yet fully embedded in classes to support all pupils to communicate and learn. You recognise that you now need to use information from your monitoring and evaluation activities to develop more focused school improvement plans.

You and other leaders described what you do to prepare pupils for life beyond primary school. As part of this preparation, you have developed a range of effective educational visits, which parents and pupils value.

Staff appreciate the work that you and other leaders have done to improve the school. One example they gave was the introduction of departmental learning conferences within school. These conferences provide staff, supported by middle leaders, with an opportunity to observe each other's lessons and look at pupils' work in books to see how well pupils are progressing. Following this, they then make plans to improve their own department. This has created a sense of ownership among staff for their own professional development and is having a positive impact on improving pupils' learning.

Children in the early years benefit from effective provision. Positive relationships between staff and informed teaching contribute to this. Staff respond calmly and swiftly when moving children on to new activities. The middle leader responsible for managing the early years has developed an enthusiastic and skilled staff team that has a deep understanding of the needs of each child.

Parents are very positive about the school and the work you do with their children. During this inspection, parents commented positively on the school's work with families. Parents also commented on the positive communication the school has with them through the school diary and phone calls. Parents value the effect the school is having on developing their children's communication skills.

Leaders track the progress pupils make through a range of effective monitoring activities. Leaders set high expectations that lessons should meet the needs of all pupils within the classes. Appropriate resources, such as learning ladders, are displayed in classrooms and are used to support teachers in providing the right level of challenge for pupils. Staff undertake moderation of pupils' work, both internally and externally with staff from a number of partner schools. You and your team have identified the need to review how you assess the progress of pupils. You know that further refinement will enable teachers to identify and plan pupils' next steps in learning with greater precision. You also know that there is some work to be done to improve the attendance of a few pupils.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders have strong and clear safeguarding practices in place. Parents, pupils and staff know who to talk to if they have a concern about pupils' safety and well-being. Staff vetting and checking systems are rigorous and up to date. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding, along with the school's leaders, ensures that all staff receive training and updates.

Pupils feel safe and they show an increasing knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. This was exemplified through a pupil's comment that 'we do risk assessments when we go on trips'. Parents spoken to during the inspection, and through their responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were firmly of the view that pupils are safe at school.

As a result of training and an effective culture of safeguarding, staff know how to monitor and record any concerns and how to respond to disclosures or concerns raised by pupils.

Inspection findings

- The school provides two separate curriculum pathways to meet a variety of needs. The curriculum for pupils who have complex learning needs provides opportunities for both individual and group learning across a range of core areas. A second pathway provides a broad curriculum for those pupils who have moderate learning needs.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education (RE) are particularly strong aspects of the school's curriculum. The PSHE and RE work in pupils' books demonstrates very clearly that pupils learn about a broad range of faiths, customs and cultures. Pupils are also taught how to work with other pupils and how to keep themselves safe. In Year 6, the curriculum is particularly engaging. For example, books showed that pupils developed a good understanding and enjoyed their work related to Shakespeare's play 'The Tempest'.
- Targets related to stages of learning are pasted in the books of pupils who have a moderate range of special educational needs. Teachers then record and date when pupils reach their targets. Learning journals are used to capture progress of pupils who have complex learning needs. As a result of training, annotation by staff now focuses on what pupils have learned rather than just what they have experienced. This has led to improvements in teaching.
- Pupil premium funding is allocated to support priorities such as language development, punctuality and engagement with families of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' analysis of pupils' progress shows that pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are achieving as well as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils are well behaved and ready for learning in lessons. Behaviour plans are developed for pupils who need them. These are accessible in classes and consistent implementation by staff is effective in supporting target pupils. Leaders have established an appropriate recording system for behaviour incidents. This shows that incidents are not frequent in the school and that incidents needing physical intervention are rare. There is an effective policy in place that outlines the school's approach to physical intervention. Staff receive regular training and updates to enable them to manage these rare incidents appropriately.
- You have put in place some support for a number of pupils who are persistently absent. However, you recognise that this is not having sufficient effect. You are conscious of the need to further improve strategies to ensure that all pupils attend regularly.
- Governors are committed to their roles and are passionate about the school. They care deeply about the pupils and staff and provide support and challenge for leaders. They visit the school regularly. Governors' understanding of the

school's areas for development is not as well informed as it could be. This limits their input to school improvement planning.

- Staff in the early years know the children well and have developed well-organised routines and structures. This means that children develop independent skills confidently. Staff take every opportunity in the early years to support and develop communication, which is evidenced by the consistent use of symbols and signing.
- You and your leadership team have identified the need to refine assessment systems further so that progress can be mapped more effectively across the early years and the rest of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they refine assessment systems to enable greater accuracy from teachers in identifying how the information they gather can be used to record small gains in pupils' progress and plan the next steps in their learning.
- information from monitoring the quality of teaching and assessments of pupils' work and progress is used more effectively to inform the school's improvement plan.
- further appropriate action is taken to improve attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Clugston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the head of school, the assistant headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and middle leaders. I also met with members of the governing body and a group of staff, which included teachers, teaching assistants and office staff.

Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I reviewed and discussed the school improvement plan with you and the senior staff. I also reviewed a range of other documents, including your evaluation of the

school's performance, pupil premium report, assessment and progress information, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, staff vetting and child protection procedures.

We visited classes with senior leaders to observe teaching and learning. We spoke to pupils during lessons and looked at their work both in and outside of lessons. Inspectors also spoke to pupils on arrival, at playtime, lunchtime and in a group meeting to discuss their views about the school and their work.