

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 April 2018

Mr Simon Minter
Headteacher
Hillside Primary School
Lords Lane
Bradwell
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk
NR31 8PA

Dear Mr Minter

Short inspection of Hillside Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 June 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You and the other leaders have ensured that the school is a happy and welcoming place. Pupils love their school and it is clear that relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils behave extremely well in their classrooms and pay close attention when their teachers speak to them. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They welcomed me enthusiastically and spoke willingly and confidently about their work and their school.

The previous inspection asked leaders to address parental concerns in order to restore their confidence in the work of the school. Good progress has been made in this area. Although few parents responded to Parent View, of those that did, virtually all said that they would recommend the school to others. Many parents chose to leave additional comments in support of the school. For example, one parent said, 'I have nothing but praise for the headmaster and his staff. A fantastic school, I am proud to say my children attend.' Another said that, 'I feel the school not only provides a rich academic experience, but it is also helping my child to build the essential skills of resilience and understanding of others.'

Published assessment information shows that most pupils are doing well. For

example, pupils' progress in reading has improved steadily over the last three years. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to that in other schools nationally. Pupils' attainment in the key stage 2 national tests was also broadly similar to the national benchmark overall.

However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was less strong. These two areas formed the main focus of this inspection and are expanded on in the 'Inspection findings' section of this letter. I found that there is more work to do to improve outcomes for these pupils.

Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school. The school's self-evaluation states that the school is already outstanding in all areas. This is not the case. Leaders' expectations are not high enough and this has a negative impact on the progress pupils are making. It is important now that leaders and governors adjust their expectations so that they are in line with schools across the country and closely reflect the grade descriptors in Ofsted's section 5 school inspection handbook.

You have not been helped by some of the external advisers that have visited the school. These visits have encouraged you to think that the school is better than it is. For example, the report from a recent 'review' of the school states that every aspect of the school is at least good and that 'much of the school's work is outstanding'. I was unable to see the evidence that these assertions were based on and my findings did not match those of the reviewer.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel happy and safe at Hillside. They say that there is little bullying and, when it does happen, it is sorted out quickly by staff. Pupils told me that the 'anti-bullying ambassadors' in Year 5 and Year 6 help them to feel safe at playtimes. Parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are safe at school and that bullying is dealt with effectively.

You have a good understanding of your role as the school's designated safeguarding lead. You have ensured that other leaders are also properly trained for the role so that they can deputise in your absence. The school's records of child protection concerns are suitably detailed and thorough. Records show clearly that prompt and appropriate action is taken to protect pupils, when necessary, in response to concerns raised.

Inspection findings

- Published assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils at Hillside make less progress than other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was also much lower than other pupils, with few disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard over the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 has been

consistently small. For this reason, I was cautious when considering this assessment information.

- In a meeting with you and the deputy headteacher, you told me that until three years ago nothing was done to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Although the pupil premium grant was introduced almost seven years ago, you told me that disadvantaged pupils had not been focused on as a group and that teachers did not know who the disadvantaged pupils were in their classes. This has improved and you now track the progress of this group of pupils.
- However, although the pupil premium grant is now used more specifically for disadvantaged pupils, spending is not yet fully effective. Leaders and governors do not ensure that there is a close link between how the money is spent and the progress that pupils make. As a result, there is little evidence that this additional funding is making any difference to how well disadvantaged pupils achieve.
- Your assessment information shows clearly that, although some disadvantaged pupils make good progress, too many do not. This was reflected in the work in pupils' books, where very little progress was evident in some cases. Leaders' expectations of what this group of pupils are capable of are too low. Comments such as, 'That's good progress for them', when the progress in a pupil's exercise book was clearly not good enough, are indicative of leaders' lower expectations of some disadvantaged pupils. This limits the progress that this small group of pupils makes.
- Published assessment information also suggests that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make good progress from their starting points. As the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities vary enormously, I chose to look carefully at whether the school could show me evidence that this group of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not well led. Leaders were unable to provide me with evidence that pupils in this group are making good progress, either in data form or through other means. For example, we looked at some pupils' individual support plans. In the examples I was shown, despite objectives being chosen specifically to meet individual needs, pupils had not been successful in meeting many of those objectives. Leaders were not aware of how often and to what extent support plan objectives were being met. Leaders do not appear to have ensured that objectives on support plans are sufficiently well chosen, so that they are both aspirational and achievable.
- Finally, I looked at attendance. The most recent published data shows an increasing trend in pupils' absence from school. Although overall attendance remains slightly better than the national average, I checked whether the downward trend was continuing or whether leaders had successfully halted it.
- I found no concerns with pupils' attendance and no evidence of a continued downward trend. You have ensured that systems are in place to encourage good attendance and to address unnecessary absence. The most recent data shows rates of attendance that are similar to the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- expectations of what disadvantaged pupils are capable of achieving are high and that the pupil premium grant is spent effectively
- leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improved so that they are certain, and are able to demonstrate, that this group of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points
- their judgements are adjusted so that they have a more accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, three governors and a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during the day. I took into account the 29 responses to Parent View and 23 free-text comments that were received. I took note of the 23 responses to the staff survey and 32 responses to the pupil survey. I observed teaching and learning, jointly with you, in five classes. I looked at pupils' work in their classrooms and, together with other senior leaders, we considered carefully the progress evident in a wide selection of pupils' exercise books. I looked at school documents, including the single central record of pre-employment checks.