

12 July 2019

Mrs Joanne Raybould
Headteacher
Bridgtown Primary School
North Street
Bridgtown
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 0AZ

Dear Mrs Raybould

Short inspection of Bridgtown Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Under your leadership, the school has continued to improve. Since the previous inspection, pupil numbers have risen, middle leadership has been developed and academic standards have strengthened. Morale is high and pupils and staff report that they feel valued at school and take pride in what they do there.

In reading, writing and mathematics, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards for their age at the end of key stages 1 and 2 compare very favourably with national figures. Disadvantaged pupils do equally as well as others and most pupils leave Year 6 ready for secondary school. The main recommendation from the previous inspection, which was about improving teaching in mathematics, has been tackled most successfully. In mathematics and other subjects, pupils enjoy their lessons and most respond well to the very competent teaching they receive. Even so, there is potential for some of the most able pupils to do even better.

In other subjects, you have plans to tighten up your checks on how well pupils are doing. Already, subject leaders are on the case and have a well-informed handle on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Nevertheless, you have further developments planned, which include reviewing the school's curriculum offer. This will include additional training for subject leaders and you are working with local

schools to help you with this.

Most pupils behave well, but a few miss too much school or struggle to manage their emotions and present some challenging behaviour. You deal with this well and have a lot of support systems and routines in place to help pupils and their families to cope with school. Permanent exclusions are very rare, although the rate of fixed-term exclusions is higher than that seen in most other schools.

Most parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and, in their comments to me, praised your staff for their approachability and support. Parents say that you deal with any problems promptly, and they are grateful for this. Parents appreciate receiving messages from school via mobile phone text and commented positively about the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The school's procedures and routines are fit for purpose.

All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children. They know how to respond to concerns about pupils' safety and are informed about risks in the local area. School records show that when any concerns have arisen, staff have followed the proper procedures and liaised with other agencies as necessary.

Pupils are taught about safety matters and how to manage everyday risks, such as using the internet. They are confident that an adult in school will help them if they have a problem.

Medicines in school and first-aid treatment are readily available when needed. Instances of unkind or rough behaviour are dealt with properly. Allegations of bullying are taken seriously, and pupils feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The majority of children start school with a level of knowledge and skill below that typical for their age. In many cases, their language and numeracy skills are underdeveloped. Consequently, the school's early years provision focuses heavily on developing these key skills. Phonics teaching starts as soon as pupils join the Nursery. Daily sessions are well organised and resourced, and staff speak clearly and pay attention to correct pronunciation. Staff receive regular training to keep them up to date and teaching is monitored by senior leaders. Similarly, mathematics teaching starts early and your team works hard to get parents involved so they can support their children's learning at home.
- This solid start in the early years helps to pave the way for learning in the rest of the school. In both key stages 1 and 2, teaching is effective and prepares pupils well for the engaging tasks they are given. In a Year 5 session, for example, pupils had to find shapes stuck to the classroom walls and work out the sizes of missing angles. This motivating activity followed on from a revision and recall activity, so pupils were able to apply their knowledge, work

independently and enjoy their learning. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils made effective use of technology to reinforce their understanding of fractions. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics and feel confident in the subject. Work in their books indicates that the quality of teaching seen during the inspection is typical.

- A notable achievement at Bridgtown Primary is the school's success at making sure disadvantaged pupils keep up with others. The pupil premium is used to employ additional staff and fund targeted support. This evidently pays off. The school's consistent and ambitious approach enables most pupils to reach the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Consequently, they leave primary school ready for the challenges of key stage 3. However, some of the most able pupils could reach higher standards if teaching stretched their thinking further.
- Your current curriculum is suitably broad, and teaching in different subjects meets pupils' needs. However, you are reviewing curriculum planning in some subjects. You are also providing extra training for subject leaders of foundation subjects so they can be more involved in checking on the quality of teaching and learning across the whole school. Again, a key aim is to push the most able pupils to excel in a range of subjects.
- In order to develop a constructive relationship with parents, you make home visits and hold stay-and-play sessions to meet families before new children start school. This helps to initiate clear lines of communication between home and school and make expectations clear. You have a close relationship with the privately run, on-site, pre-school provision, and pre-school children visit school, during the summer term, before starting in the autumn. On the day of the inspection, for example, a group of pre-school children joined school pupils for lunch. These transition activities enable you and your team to get to know the children before they start, and get children used to school life.
- Once children have started school, parents are invited to attend regular meetings to discuss how they can support their children at home. In addition, parents can participate in 'inspire workshops' when they come into class to work with their children on a particular task. These activities keep parents informed about learning and how well their children are doing.
- You routinely gather parents' views through questionnaires. If a pupil or parent has an idea or a concern about anything then you make sure you meet and talk with them as soon as possible. You listen and take quick action to sort out any problems that arise. Parents who spoke with me said that school staff are approachable and go out of their way to help them. There were too few responses on Parent View to generate a report, but the majority of free-text entries expressed satisfaction with the school's work.
- In each of the last three years, the level of persistent absence, i.e. pupils who miss more than 10% of schooling each year, has been more than twice the level seen nationally. This means a significant proportion of pupils are missing the equivalent of half a day's lessons or more. In some cases, there are legitimate reasons for absence, but in most cases there are not. Some parents keep their children off school without good cause or take them on holiday in term time, which hinders their progress at school. In response, you have

appointed an attendance manager whose role is to challenge and support parents who do not send their children to school often enough or on time. The attendance manager and senior staff hold 'attendance clinics' with parents to identify ways to improve punctuality and attendance. You also supply parents with information that highlights the effect of poor attendance on progress at school. In response to the numerous incentives to reward regular attendance, the proportion of unauthorised absences has reduced. However, too many pupils continue to miss too much school.

- Most pupils behave well, but some do not. You have effective systems in place to recognise and reward good behaviour and to challenge and support any behaviour that falls short of your high expectations. Termly awards, thank you cards and an exciting treasure box of treats help to encourage positive attitudes. In addition, a consistent and disciplined approach to supporting pupils to improve their behaviour also brings successful results.
- The local authority recognises your sterling work with a range of professional agencies to support pupils at risk of exclusion and their families. You have an established track record for avoiding permanent exclusions but fixed-term exclusions, while reducing, still happen more often than in most other schools. When you do have cause to use this sanction you make sure that all the proper processes are followed and put extra support in place when a pupil returns to school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- continue to improve teaching so that the most able pupils reach even higher standards across the curriculum, by:
 - strengthening subject leadership
 - making sure that your review of the school curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to excel.
- work with parents and outside agencies to improve the attendance of pupils who miss too much school.

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

Diane Pye
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, members of your staff team and six governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I carried out short observations of teaching and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and at other times during the day. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were nine recent responses on Parent View and six free-text responses. I took account of these and also considered the five responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, pupils' achievement and attendance information, exclusion records, external reports about the school, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked the staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.