

6 June 2018

Miss Rachael Huff
Headteacher
Welland Primary School
Marlbank Road
Welland
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR13 6NE

Dear Miss Huff

Short inspection of Welland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 March 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 the 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.** However, there is clear evidence that outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 have declined since it was last inspected.

You have maintained a calm, orderly environment around the school, including in the playground at lunchtime and in most classes. Pupils behave well and have a strong sense of responsibility to look out for others.

Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics were high for pupils up to the end of key stage 1 in the most recent assessments in 2017.

Governors have an accurate and realistic view of the decline in pupils' outcomes in key stage 2. They are taking action belatedly, in partnership with support commissioned on behalf of the local authority to improve leadership capacity. The school's external partner has given the school a clear indication of what it needs to do to secure improvements. External support is providing robust challenge to leaders.

Leaders have worked hard to address some of the issues identified for improvement at the last inspection. Pupils now have some understanding of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain. By the end of key stage 1, pupils apply their writing and mathematical skills well in different subjects. However, leaders have had limited impact on other issues identified for improvement. No teaching is yet outstanding. Pupils' progress in their writing and mathematical skills in key stage 2 has declined

since the last inspection. Too much of pupils' work is still not well presented, as a result of teachers' inconsistent expectations.

Safeguarding is effective.

Following a recent external review of safeguarding, leaders and governors have acted with urgency to address the shortcomings identified. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are now effective. Training for leaders and all staff is up to date. The school meets its statutory responsibilities. There had previously been a culture of complacency, with governors recognising they had too readily trusted leaders' judgements. Governors are now taking a more robust approach to holding leaders to account for safeguarding.

Pupils that I spoke with reported that bullying had been an issue of concern for them until recently. They said that there had been improvements, and that consequently bullying was no longer happening. Pupils were adamant that if they witnessed or experienced bullying they would report it to an adult. They said that they were not deterred by any fears of reprisals from the perpetrators.

The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or made use of the free-text service, were positive about the way that the school keeps their children safe. Concerns around bullying remain for a large minority of parents.

Inspection findings

- Outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have declined since the school was last inspected. Over the last three years, progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in mathematics has remained very low and shows little sign of improvement. Progress in reading had been in line with the national average previously, but in 2017 was below average. Progress in writing improved in the most recent assessments but remained low.
- Progress for current pupils is inconsistent and depends on the quality of teaching, which varies between the different classes. Where teaching over time is good, it is leading to good progress for pupils. This is offset by less effective teaching which restricts pupils' progress. Although the issue was raised at the last inspection, there is little sign that leaders are challenging teachers sufficiently to raise expectations for the presentation of work and setting of challenging work for pupils.
- Although a number of pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, the extent to which teachers set work to meet their different needs is variable. In some classes, all pupils receive exactly the same level of challenge, which is too easy for some and too difficult for others.

In these instances teaching assistants are supporting pupils to complete the task rather than developing their learning and understanding. Some pupils lose valuable time copying learning objectives which too many of them do not understand. In other classes, teachers and additional adults work well with most-

able pupils to stretch and challenge them. They also provide effective scaffolded activities for those finding the work difficult. For example, in a key stage 1 mathematics investigation into directions on a grid, different groups of pupils were set tasks at an appropriate level of challenge.

- This lack of consistency in the quality of teaching from class to class was reflected in the wide range of comments that I received from parents. Most were very happy with their children's progress, but others, including some whose children have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, were extremely dissatisfied.
- The rate of pupils' attendance has been on a falling trend over the last three years, from above to below average. The figures for the academic year to date indicate that the rate is set to fall further. Leaders were unable to demonstrate the impact of any initiatives to improve rates of attendance or reduce persistent absence.
- The leadership of literacy and numeracy has limited capacity to effect improvements. There is a lack of time allocated for leaders to fulfil their roles. This severely limits their ability to monitor teaching or work with teachers who need help and support in teaching literacy and numeracy. Leaders were unable to explain the mismatch between how they judge the quality of teaching as good and the limited progress pupils have made in key stage 2. Leaders have an overgenerous view of the effectiveness of the school. About three in every five parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent. The others said they would not.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have achieved high outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Their outcomes have been thoroughly monitored both internally and by other schools to ensure that assessments are accurate. Work seen in pupils' books indicates that many pupils are working at above average standards by the end of Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed the recently established culture of safeguarding so that more parents have confidence that the school is keeping their children safe
- outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics improve significantly for pupils at the end of key stage 2 by making sure that teaching is at least consistently good across year groups
- those with leadership responsibilities for literacy and numeracy have sufficient time, guidance and support to carry out their monitoring roles effectively
- they establish and address the causes for the long-term decline in pupils' attendance, so that attendance improves to the point where it is at least in line with the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders and other teaching staff. I also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I met with the school's improvement partner. I met with a group of nine pupils from Reception to Year 6.

I carried out six lesson observations jointly with you, which included scrutinising pupils' books and talking to pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including in the playground. I took account of 53 responses to Parent View, 50 responses to the free-text service and letters given to me during the inspection. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; information about pupils' performance, behaviour and attendance; several school policy documents; and safeguarding and child protection records. I also checked the school's website.

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection were: the progress and quality of teaching for pupils currently in key stage 2 in reading, writing and especially mathematics; the accuracy of assessment in key stage 1 in reading writing and especially mathematics; the leadership of mathematics and literacy; the impact of leadership on improving attendance; and the culture of safeguarding.