

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Alvin Fell
Headteacher
Flowery Field Primary School
Off Old Road
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 4SQ

Dear Mr Fell

Short inspection of Flowery Field Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2019 with Ofsted inspector Tracy Webb, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. It is clear to us that leaders and staff make full use of the impressive buildings and grounds to provide pupils with many worthwhile learning experiences. From below typical starting points in the early years, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a school where pupils are engaged in learning before, during and after the traditional school day. For instance, they gain extra help with their reading skills, tend the goats, pigs and chickens at the on-site school farm and attend many sporting activities.

The school became an academy in The Enquire Learning Trust in June 2016. Flowery Field Primary School remains a popular choice with local parents and carers and the number of pupils on roll has grown significantly in recent years. You have achieved such growth while maintaining this large school as a remarkably calm and happy environment.

Through the support of the academy trust, senior leaders have strengthened the work of middle leaders to contribute actively to the improvement of the school. Middle leaders have frequent opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in the same year group, subject or key stage. Inexperienced leaders have valuable chances to step into leadership roles, alongside more expert colleagues. Staff commented that leaders give careful attention to making sure that employees have a manageable workload and a reasonable balance of time between life at work and home.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of staff and leaders. They praise the school for the wide range of learning available for their children. Parents commented very positively on the willingness of senior leaders to give time and support to families, whenever issues arise. A typical parental comment was: 'My children have loved every day at Flowery Field. It is a fun, engaging and nurturing environment. The children are encouraged to always be their best and as a parent, I always feel informed and involved.'

Parents and pupils praised the quality of teaching, for instance in reading and mathematics. Even so, we found that teachers sometimes do not enable pupils to achieve enough confidence and competence in learning mathematical concepts.

During the inspection, we found that pupils' behaviour was very positive. They moved along corridors and stairwells sensibly. They were consistently polite to all adults and keen to talk with us. In lessons they focused on activities because they are keen to learn. They care for others and understand the importance of fund-raising, for example to help people affected by the Manchester bombing in 2017. Pupils' comments indicated that they respect different people, such as people of different gender or those who identify with no specific gender. Nevertheless, they did not have a convincing comprehension of the British values of democracy and the rule of law.

Leadership of the school is strong and benefits from the support and links with other schools in the academy trust. Senior and middle leaders have a secure grasp of what the school does successfully. They are clear what the school is doing to improve the attainment and progress of pupils further.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff are highly visible as pupils and parents arrive at and depart from school. Communication with families is good. Leaders and staff know individual pupils well. Senior leaders and staff are frequently involved in giving some parents extra help and support with the care and protection of pupils.

Staff are vigilant concerning their responsibilities for pupils' well-being and understand how to refer concerns. The academy trust makes certain that staff have regular access to a wide range of national information about safeguarding.

Senior leaders, governors and the academy trust keep a close check on the work of the school to safeguard pupils and staff. Senior leaders link fully with other agencies and they are unafraid to challenge other professionals when they feel that improved action is needed to support families. Pupils said that they feel safe at the school.

Inspection findings

- We looked at the work of the school in key stage 2 in mathematics because pupils' attainment was below average in 2018. Current pupils' learning is improving because of much improved staff expertise. Staff make apt use of

resources to make learning interesting. They challenge pupils to try and solve problems independently. The mathematics team gives effective leadership to the work of staff in this subject. Governors also keep a close check on the work of leaders to improve mathematics. The quality of work in pupils' books supports information provided by the school that pupils' progress in mathematics is improving considerably this year. Nonetheless, in some tasks teachers need to make certain that pupils fully grasp what is being taught before introducing further work.

- In Year 1 in 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics was below average. We wanted to see what the school is doing about this. We found that in key stage 1, pupils are increasingly developing their knowledge of the sounds that letters make. Teachers and teaching assistants use technical language skilfully. This is due to their good subject knowledge and grasp of effective teaching. Leaders use assessment carefully to ensure that staff use reading books that match pupils' phonics abilities. Parents told inspectors of the school's strong emphasis on the importance of pupils practising their reading at home. Leaders review school information in detail to identify aspects of pupils' understanding of phonics that need extra attention by staff. They provide helpful support and advice to families to build parents' own confidence with books, phonics and reading. School information indicates that pupils' knowledge of phonics is improving quickly and more securely this year.
- We focused on the school's work in the early years because the proportion of children gaining a good level of development was below average in 2018. It is clear to us that from starting points below those found typically, children in the early years make good progress. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes work well together. They give children many essential activities to develop their ability to read, write and count. For example, children have studied the story of 'The Hungry Monster' and staff helped Nursery children to write labels confidently for a huge monster picture. Activities in the early years are full of conversation, where staff skilfully extend and support children's ability to communicate, manage their own feelings and behaviour and relate warmly to others. Children throughout the early years are confident, keen explorers who learn successfully indoors and outdoors. Staff make successful links with parents. One typical parental comment was: 'I feel that since September the progress my child has made is amazing. He is so confident and is always coming home telling me the different things he has learned such as "the thing inside a volcano is magma and when it comes out it turns into lava".'
- Although it was not a line of enquiry for the inspection, we found that leaders and staff give much worthwhile attention to the vocabulary that pupils need to learn. From the early years and throughout the school, staff plan and carefully teach the new language that pupils need. Pupils have many opportunities to speak with different audiences and for a variety of purposes. As a result, they are increasingly ready for speaking occasions in their future lives.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop a strong knowledge of democracy and the rule of law
- in mathematics, all teachers give pupils enough opportunities to practise and consolidate their understanding of key concepts.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Tameside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We visited a sample of classrooms and undertook some observations with senior leaders. We looked at a sample of pupils' mathematics books from key stage 2 and considered school information about the early years and phonics in key stage 1.

We held a range of meetings with senior leaders. We also met with the leaders for phonics, early years and mathematics, a representative of the academy trust, two governors from the local governing body and a random sample of pupils from Year 3 to Year 5.

We spoke with pupils around the school premises. We talked with some parents as they dropped their children at school at the start of the inspection. We reviewed 82 responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 25 free-text responses. We considered responses from 33 staff to an Ofsted survey.