

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 February 2017

Mrs Sandra Hartley
Headteacher
Greenbank Primary School
Greenbank Road
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL12 0HZ

Dear Mrs Hartley

Short inspection of Greenbank Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2017, 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team provide a safe, nurturing and harmonious learning environment for every pupil at Greenbank Primary School. Your belief is that every pupil can and should achieve their best. You work tirelessly to address barriers to learning and provide a raft of carefully planned support and intervention programmes for your pupils. Your knowledge and understanding of the diverse community that the school serves is excellent. You use this information well to shape the education that the school provides so that it best meets pupils' needs.

Coupled with your knowledge of the school's community is your commitment to inclusion, which is striking. Your highly effective, pastoral support team offers bespoke training to vulnerable families, including emotional and practical support. This helps families and their children to re-engage quickly in their learning. Additional provision, for example the Nurture Room and Rainbow Room, have a positive effect on pupils' development because they focus on building resilience, self-esteem and confidence in your pupils. Most recently, you have committed to providing support to develop healthy young minds. All of these initiatives serve to promote pupils' emotional well-being so that they can continue to make very good progress in their learning.

Since the last inspection you have continued to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have rightly focused on improving pupils' handwriting and their spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is clearly evident in pupils' work.

The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in English, spelling, punctuation and grammar has also increased to that found nationally. You ensure that classrooms are purposeful and teachers' planning for learning is secure. The learning environment is bright and vibrant; it is supportive of pupils' needs and interests. Classrooms create fluid learning opportunities for pupils because teachers make use of all the space available to them. A strong team of teaching assistants also provides additional support to pupils. Teaching assistants are trained regularly to support learning across the curriculum. Recently, they have undertaken training in teaching and assessing phonics. Teachers and teaching assistants use small-group sessions to ensure that pupils keep up and catch up. The effect of this improved provision is that now in key stage 1, for the first time, standards are in line with those of other pupils nationally.

You, along with your leadership team, lead the way in assessment development. You are currently designing a new system for measuring how much progress pupils are making in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, you continue to create an online assessment tool that spans from the early years through to key stage 2. This should allow parents to engage further with their children's education by having visual and written representations of their child's work easily available to them. You also provide parents with sessions on how they can continue to help their children learn at home, for example with reading. Parents value this.

The visual representations of pupils' work afforded to pupils and their families are not just limited to the classroom. Your passion for outdoor education, which underpins every aspect of your curriculum, is a key strength of the school. It means pupils have real-life experiences on which to base their learning. In mathematics, for example, pupils use archery to work out coordinates, and use their experiences of kayaking and horse riding to produce high-quality written work. This inspires pupils by igniting their imagination. Pupils love these experiences because they help them to make good progress and they have tremendous fun in everyday learning. The result of this exciting curriculum is that pupils are engaged and they make good progress from the early years to key stage 2. You know that the next stage is to ensure that pupils now achieve as well as other pupils nationally, especially in reading.

Leadership is a key strength of the school. You have improved leadership at all levels, including middle leadership. You provide appropriate ongoing training to middle leaders and you continue to strength accountability and monitoring procedures. Added to this, the precision with which you and your deputy headteacher understand the strengths and weaknesses of your school is abundantly clear. Your evaluation of the quality of education provided by the school is accurate and you know what you need to do to improve outcomes for your pupils further. Your approach to improvement planning is sharp and focused. You leave no stone unturned in your mission to be the very best. You know that standards need to continue to rise so that your pupils reach the same standards as other pupils nationally.

Following on from these successful improvements, you acknowledge that the next steps for your school are to continue to improve the standard pupils achieve in reading across the school. This is because, although pupils make good progress in reading from their starting points, they do not yet achieve as well as other pupils nationally. You recognise that to do this, pupils' comprehension skills need to be developed. Also, you acknowledge that pupils need to be challenged further to achieve the highest standard by the end of key stage 2. This is because as standards improve at key stage 1, teachers in key stage 2 need to stretch pupils further so that they continue the momentum on their learning journey.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records, referrals and the following up of cases are timely and robust. As a result of your work, pupils feel safe and parents are confident in your work to ensure that pupils are safe. The work that leaders and the governing body do to prevent extremism is also strong. You have a governor who is an adviser on extremism. This provides a whole raft of extra training for pupils and staff on hate crime, for example. You also have a link with a school in the local area that is different to yours so that pupils can learn about tolerance, respect and diversity.

Inspection findings

- Writing is a key strength of the school. Pupils make very strong progress in writing because there is a relentless focus on developing writing skills across the curriculum. Leaders focus on building pupils' vocabulary and real-life experiences enables pupils to debate and discuss what they might write before putting pen to paper. Leaders ensure that pupils build stamina in writing. This starts in the early years where children are expected to engage in 'talk for writing'. The use of 'grammar hammer' and leaders' commitment to an orally rich environment means that pupils continue to make some of the best rates of progress in writing found nationally. Leaders know that they must mirror this level of progress and attainment in reading, which is not as strong.
- There has been a complete overhaul of the curriculum in key stage 1. Leaders have redeployed teachers so that pupils get the best possible learning experience for their age. Teachers and teaching assistants use skilful questioning techniques. Adults plan effectively for the range of different abilities in their classes. Pupils' books now show that they make good progress by the end of key stage 1. Leaders rightly recognise that they now need to sustain this improvement. They are not only determined to sustain it but they have clear plans to improve provision and standards.
- The wider curriculum at Greenbank School is a strength. Pupils are given a plethora of 'hooks' to catch their attention and engage them in learning. Leaders' passion for the wider curriculum means that teachers are given the freedom to plan creatively to support learning and progress. In a geography lesson, pupils were learning about Ghana. Pupils flowed in and out of activities with ease, worked well in small groups and responded maturely and appropriately to

teachers' questions. Pupils make good progress because they are engaged and interested; this means that most take pride in their work and are keen to share what they are doing.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about different faiths. Each morning pupils have a fitness programme to get them ready for the day. Music, art and languages are also strong. Outdoor education provides pupils with opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, teamwork and resilience. Parents say that they appreciate the rich and varied experiences you afford their children because they promote wider learning and development. They can see confidence developing in their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the standard pupils reach in reading by the end of key stage 2 continues to improve by developing further pupils' comprehension skills
- they capitalise on the strong improvements made by pupils at the end of key stage 1, so that more pupils are challenged to achieve the highest standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Smart
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior team, middle leaders, parents of pupils from the school, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Also, I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons. I listened to pupils read. In addition, I jointly observed teaching and learning in key stage 1, key stage 2 and the early years. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school's improvement priorities, attendance information, a range of policies and the school's curricular information. I also undertook a review of the school's website. As part of the inspection, I considered two responses from parents to Ofsted's free text service, 23 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire and three responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.