

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 January 2018

Mrs Sue Bradley
Executive Headteacher
Newton's Walk
56 Cedar Street
Derby
Derbyshire
DE22 1GE

Dear Mrs Bradley

Short inspection of Newton's Walk

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018 with Heather Hawkes, Ofsted Inspector, 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.

This school continues to be good. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide very strong leadership and have confidently challenged poor performance. You have created a very positive culture, expecting high standards throughout the school.

Together with the management committee, you have ensured and absolutely insisted that pupils are at the heart of what staff do each day and are always put first. You constantly ask yourselves the question 'What difference is this making for the pupils?'

In 2015, the local authority asked you, together with the management committee from Kingsmead School, to take over the management of Newton's Walk. You quickly identified areas for concern and took swift action to bring about improvement. You recognised the importance of securing judgements through external support and organised an independent school review. Using the outcomes of the review, together with your own analysis, you and the management committee formed a strategic plan for improvement with key priorities and agreed actions. Recognising that poor behaviour was having a negative impact on teaching and learning, you set about changing the culture in school to ensure that this did not continue.

You strengthened the leadership team by making some key appointments and by ensuring that roles and responsibilities were fully understood and leaders held accountable. Leaders at all levels feel they have been given clarity of purpose and the opportunity to develop their practice and to innovate. As a result, the head of the primary stage, together with the leadership team, effectively lead and manage

the school on a day-to-day basis, enabling you to take the overview and provide quality assurance in your role as executive headteacher.

You clearly describe and evidence the journey the school has taken from 2015 to the present. Changes made to drive improvement have been timely and purposeful. Self-evaluation is accurate and clearly defines the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. Together with the head of primary and management committee, you lead the drive to provide the best quality care and education for each pupil. All staff work effectively and diligently to support pupils' well-being, behaviour and learning.

The school's high-quality professional development and training ensure that all staff are very well supported in their roles. Teaching assistants fully understand their duties and level of responsibilities. They provide very good support to their pupils.

The team of family workers provides high-quality support to parents and carers. Many parents have experienced frustrations and challenges as a result of their children's permanent exclusion from mainstream school. They very much appreciate the support they receive from staff at Newton's Walk and are happy to see their children back in education. One parent expressed the view of others, commenting that Newton's Walk has made her child much happier in his learning and ensured he is making progress towards a mainstream school.

Teachers carefully plan sessions to interest and engage pupils in their learning. Over time and sometimes very quickly after entry to the school, negative behaviour and poor attitudes to learning are turned around. Most pupils therefore enjoy their activities and try hard to do their best. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils told us they feel safe in school.

As a result of the work you have undertaken to develop 'pupil passports', assessment is accurate and tracked very thoroughly for each pupil. The half-termly progress meetings enable teachers to finely tune the activities they plan in response to how well pupils are achieving. Leaders use them to closely monitor progress across school and challenge any poor performance.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and is being further developed by leaders. The school provides a wide range of activities which include visits out of school to the theatre, local church and mayor's parlour, together with a variety of visitors who come into the school, including the fire service and police.

The school's learning environment is warm and welcoming. Staff organise their classrooms to maximise learning for their pupils and provide a range of resources to support, stimulate and engage pupils in learning. The soft play area is used effectively to support pupils when they need time to calm down and self-regulate. You have noted the positive impact on behaviour from the more recent introduction of sensory circuits available for all pupils.

At the time of the previous full inspection, leaders were asked to accelerate

achievement in English, particularly in writing, and by training staff in the teaching of phonics. They were also recommended to work with the local authority to adapt the accommodation so there are more opportunities for pupils to learn in smaller groups to support improved behaviour. These aspects have been addressed.

Writing has been a particular focus and you rightly acknowledge the need to further develop this across the curriculum, especially as many pupils find writing difficult on entry to the school or have a negative attitude when faced with a writing task. The recently completed reception area has enabled space in the school to be better utilised and supports pupils' positive behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and careful checks are made by staff and the management committee. The single central record is kept up to date and all necessary checks are made when appointing new staff.

Child protection records are well maintained. All staff receive regular training and updates. They are aware of how to make referrals using the school's system. Partnerships with local agencies are strong and well established.

Behaviour incidents are well documented and followed up. When the school uses restraint, this is mainly to move a pupil to a safe place. Leaders track and monitor individual pupils carefully, inform parents and involve family workers to support them where necessary.

In discussions with senior leaders and members of the management committee, convincing evidence was provided about pupils' attendance. The school is doing everything it can under unusual circumstances to ensure that each pupil attends school as frequently as possible, but, despite this, overall attendance is weak.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, inspectors focused on the following key lines of enquiry: how successfully leaders and members have maintained good teaching and learning outcomes; how successfully leaders have tackled the areas for improvement since the last inspection; how effectively leaders support pupils to manage their behaviour to minimise time lost from learning and how well the curriculum supports the needs of all pupils to achieve good learning outcomes.
- The development of 'pupil passports' as part of the assessment and curriculum review has led to greater individual support for pupils' learning. It has also enabled leaders to track pupils' progress across the school more effectively. Learning is broken down into small steps, which are built up over time. Most pupils make good progress when measured against these. Some pupils make rapid progress after entry to Newton's Walk.
- A wide range of enrichment opportunities, including outdoor learning, are built into the curriculum plan, which staff have used effectively to engage pupils in

learning. Leaders acknowledge that these activities could be used to further develop pupils' writing across the curriculum.

- Leaders have created a culture in which pupils learn to respect staff, each other and visitors to the school. They are polite and courteous in class and as they move around the school. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when online. School staff also offer support to parents to ensure that they are kept updated on developing technology.
- Leaders are developing the science curriculum and where possible linking this to the topics on which class groups work. They know there is further work to be done to support pupils' learning and understanding of practical science.
- After identifying reading as a priority, leaders made timely and prompt decisions about programmes needed to support teaching. As a result, teachers and their assistants have used resources effectively to motivate and engage pupils in reading activities. Pupils were keen to read to an inspector and showed good understanding of unfamiliar words and were enthusiastic in their explanations of characters' activities in their stories.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are supported over time to learn to manage their own behaviour. Expectations are high and consistent across the school. Pupils value the school rewards system and try hard to achieve their points each day. They enjoy using their 'wage slip' to use in the school shop.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils. They know each pupil well and are skilled in their knowledge of when to support and when to further challenge their pupils to achieve intended outcomes. They also provide effective feedback to pupils during and at the end of lessons.
- Leaders monitor teaching and learning with increased rigour. Checks on teaching and pupils' work are carried out by leaders in pairs to ensure their judgements are reached securely. The school improvement officer has supported this process to provide moderation. As a result, effective improvements and interventions are put in place quickly.
- The management committee has ensured 'no stone is left unturned' in the drive for improvement by providing effective support and challenge. It is very well led and has a strong professional relationship with senior leaders. Members know the school's strengths, areas for development and priorities, and are well equipped in their skills and experience to continue the drive for improvement. They keep a close eye on the school's finances, including additional funding, such as the physical education and sport premium, to ensure the most effective use of resources and best opportunities for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- greater opportunities are created for pupils to write with meaning and purpose, in a variety of genres across the curriculum, and where possible using pupils' interests as a starting point

- the teaching of science captures pupils' interest and promotes the development of their knowledge and understanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Morgan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you, other leaders, members of the management committee and staff. They also held telephone conversations with some parents. Inspectors visited classrooms with senior leaders and looked at pupils' work. They spoke with pupils and heard pupils read. There was only one response to Parent View; however, inspectors considered the evaluations from the school's own latest survey. They also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding records, assessment information about pupils' progress, information about behaviour, attendance and safety, and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. Inspectors also looked at information published on the school's website.