

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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10 July 2019

Mrs Clare Tilling  
Headteacher  
St White's Primary School  
Sneyd Wood Road  
Cinderford  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 3GD

Dear Mrs Tilling

### **Short inspection of St White's Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 November 2015.

#### **The school continues to be good.**

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education at the school since the last inspection.

You took over as headteacher earlier this year. Together with the governors you are establishing your leadership team while continuing to improve the work of the school. Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked on the areas for improvement. This work has been very effective. Attendance has improved so that last year it was above the national average. Pupils' writing has also improved and has been above the national average for the past three years.

Governors have the highest aspirations for the success of the pupils. They have taken strong strategic decisions. They are knowledgeable and hold leaders to account effectively.

Pupils enjoy school, are well behaved, confident and increasingly articulate. They value the teaching that they receive. They enjoy the wide range of activities, trips and other opportunities that are provided for them. Parents agree, commenting, 'The school is good at providing opportunities for the children which prepare them for the real world, broaden their horizons and develop life skills.' Parents are positive about their children's progress. They are pleased with how the school has helped their children to grow in confidence. They recognise the value of the emotional and other support the school provides. Teachers and other staff enjoy working at St White's and are very positive about their professional development.

## **Safeguarding is effective**

It is clear that all members of staff, leaders and governors take the safeguarding of children very seriously. They work hard to make sure that pupils are safe. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. The arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children meet requirements.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding, on induction to the school and through regular updates. As a result, they are confident to raise any concerns they may have. Concerns are followed up rigorously. Leaders are vigilant and ensure that they work effectively with other agencies, including the police, to address the concerns.

Pupils are taught how to be safe, both in school and in the community through lessons, trips and assemblies. Pupils know who to go to if they are worried. They are confident that any worries, including about bullying, poor or discriminating behaviour, will be dealt with quickly. As a result of the good work of staff, children feel safe, and their parents agree that the school helps to keep their children safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- The first line of enquiry was about how effectively leaders and governors are supporting learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders put these children at the centre of everything that they do and have the highest aspiration for their success. They carefully analyse the needs, strengths and weaknesses of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this information to design the curriculum and provide support for these pupils. Leaders and governors have taken appropriate budgetary decisions to support this, such as appointing extra support staff. Teachers are held to account for the progress that all pupils make, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils. As a result of this, and the relentless focus on improving teaching and learning, these pupils make good progress.
- Second, we looked at the work that you are doing to ensure that pupils reach the highest possible standards. Over the past few years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has improved so that it is above the national figure. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards is not good enough. You have made this a priority for school development. Leaders have made changes to the way that mathematics is taught. Pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical reasoning to solve problems. This is starting to be effective and more pupils are now achieving highly. You have also introduced changes to the way that pupils develop their writing skills. We observed this working well in lessons and in the quality of writing in pupils' books. However, this approach has only recently been adopted. It has not yet resulted in sustained improvement. You are committed to further work.
- Finally, we explored the work that teachers are doing to improve pupils' spelling and vocabulary. Although spelling has improved over the past few years, you have identified that some pupils lack confidence in spelling. This holds back their overall performance in writing. You have also identified that pupils do not have

the wide and extensive vocabulary that would enable them to read more complex books. As a result, you have introduced a systematic approach that uses more oral discussion of new words. You use games and expect pupils to learn more spellings each week. Teachers are carrying out this new approach effectively. You are carefully tracking the impact. You have found that pupils are achieving more success in their spelling and have a wider vocabulary as a result. However, you also recognise that this approach will take time.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- embed and enhance recent approaches to enable all children to reach the highest standards they are capable of, especially in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Tom Morrison  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with parents, pupils, staff and governors. Together with senior leaders, we observed learning across the school and looked at pupils' work to see the changes that had been made to teaching and learning. I examined a variety of documents, including your evaluation of the performance of the school, development plans, assessment information and the school's website. I also examined records of the checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of the views of the parents in the 26 responses to the Ofsted online survey and from meeting some parents before school. I met a group of staff and of pupils to listen to their views.