

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 December 2018

Ms Claire Westcott
Headteacher
Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery
Roderick Avenue North
Peacehaven
East Sussex
BN10 8BZ

Dear Ms Westcott

Short inspection of Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 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 December 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 and your staff have focused well on improving areas highlighted at the last inspection. The curriculum has been well considered and developed in breadth and richness. This is evident across the interesting topics which are now sequenced well to build pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. During the inspection, all pupils were studying the theme 'a long time ago'. Appropriately planned learning activities around this theme were evident in all classes. Pupils enjoyed telling the inspector about learning about life in the Stone Age and sharing their knowledge about this topic. Specialist teaching in physical education is supporting pupils' physical health and well-being strongly. Leaders' work to develop outdoor learning opportunities and the spaces that the children use in which to play and learn has enhanced effectively the curriculum provision for all pupils. Pupils are challenged well to learn more and say that 'it makes [them] feel proud' when their teachers push them to do more challenging work. They are resilient learners.

Leaders' work to develop the culture and ethos of the school is very effective. This is a calm and purposeful school where pupils enjoy learning and are very proud of their school and how their teachers help them to learn. Staff and parents are fully in agreement with the leaders' and governors' vision to continually improve the school. Your work to secure better progress in mathematics for pupils is coordinated well. Partnership work with other primary schools is helping teachers to become even better skilled at driving up standards. As a result, pupils currently at the school are achieving better in mathematics than previous cohorts. Since the last inspection you

and other leaders have developed a new effective Nursery provision. Leaders and staff know the children well and the transition from Nursery to Reception is coordinated strongly and supports children and families well. Parents feel fully involved in their children's learning in the Nursery. As a result, the children are very well prepared for their move to the next phase of education. The strong support for children continues throughout the early years and more children than previously are leaving the early years better prepared for key stage 1.

Your work to improve school attendance has reduced quickly the absence rates for the few groups of pupils who previously had higher-than-average rates of absence. There are no groups of pupils that are disadvantaged by poor rates of attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective and fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and up to date with statutory changes. Staff checks and recruitment procedures are thorough. Staff know how to report any concerns appropriately, as do pupils. The school's work with other agencies is well organised and timely. As a result, pupils and families are very well supported if they need help. Governors work closely with school leaders and check regularly that safeguarding procedures work well. Pupils say bullying is very rare and if it occurs it is dealt with quickly by adults. Most parents feel that their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum has been developed well and includes a wide variety of rich and interesting topics. Informative display work, around the school, shares the pupils' learning from their topics and shows a sense of pride in pupils' achievement. Well-chosen, challenging story books are used appropriately to stimulate learning. For example, pupils read the adventure book 'The real boat', by Marina Aromshtam, in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to help them learn and write creatively about age-appropriate topics like 'intrepid innovations' in Year 4 and 'the great wave' in Year 5. More pupils are achieving at the higher grades in writing than in previous years. Leaders and other staff checks of pupils' work across all areas of the curriculum are accurately identifying how pupils need to improve their writing. Staff have increased quickly the range of subject-specific language used by pupils in their writing. For example, Year 6 were using science-specific vocabulary very well to show their understanding of particles and the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Staff know the needs of the pupils well. They use personal approaches, matched to pupils' individual needs effectively across year groups. Additional adults are used very effectively in classrooms and for individual and group support. Consequently, more pupils are making good or better progress than previously. There is more work to be done here to secure even better progress for all pupils with SEND across the curriculum.

- You and the other leaders have a determined approach to addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Your work to develop the wider curriculum and teaching and learning is ensuring that more disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly with other pupils with similar starting points. Current disadvantaged pupils at the school are achieving strongly and many are achieving as well as, or sometimes better than, other pupils with similar starting points across a wide range of subjects. Leaders know the few disadvantaged children in early years and Nursery very well. They plan individual support for them and work closely with parents, so that these children are supported and prepared well for the next stage of their education. We agreed that there is more to be done to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils catch up with other pupils as quickly as many of them do.
- Yours and the staff's strong teamwork to develop the curriculum and teaching and learning has ensured that all pupils, including the most able pupils, are challenged suitably. Pupils' work in science and mathematics is making the most able pupils think deeply and demanding them to learn more. They also make strong progress in art and technology. Pupils learn about other world cultures. They also learn that it is okay to be different. They told the inspector about assemblies that help them to learn about being different and that this is fine. Your work with parents since the last inspection has helped engage more parents in day-to-day school life very effectively. Your clever use of technology gives parents up-to-date and regular information about school. This is valued highly by many parents. Regular open afternoon visits help parents know what books their children are reading at school. Attendance to these events is high and improving quickly because parents have a lot of faith in your vision and work that is helping pupils to learn better.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is further embedded so that all pupils in vulnerable groups make progress in line with or better than other pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Dylan Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders during the day. He observed learning in most classes, all jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector reviewed work in several of pupils' books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders. Pupils spoke informally to the inspector during the day and he met with a group of pupils and observed pupils during playtime. The inspector took account of 46 survey responses submitted by pupils.

Parent's views were considered through face-to-face informal discussions before school and 94 replies to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the associated free-text comments. The inspector also took account of 18 survey responses submitted by staff. He checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance, monitoring and improvement. The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children. During the inspection, the inspector reviewed the school's evaluation and planning documentation and other school information, including the pupils' performance information that is available publicly. The inspector also met with governors and spoke to two representatives of the local authority.