

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 February 2019

Mrs Jane Davenport
Headteacher
Reynalds Cross School
Kineton Green Road
Olton
Solihull
West Midlands
B92 7ER

Dear Mrs Davenport

Short inspection of Reynalds Cross School

Following my visit to the school on 15 January 2019 with Linda McGill, 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Governors and the leadership team are very reflective and have a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement.

Leaders have successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection. They have refined and developed how they monitor and track all aspects of pupil progress, including in reading. They have also improved the systems required to monitor progress, attendance and safeguarding and use a range of systems to communicate with pupils. They are continuing to refine these systems in order to ensure that all pupils continue to make good progress.

Pupils' targets reflect their developmental and academic needs. These targets are monitored regularly, and appropriate support is put in place to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. Short-term targets are used effectively and focus on specific individual needs for pupils. These targets make a positive contribution to the progress pupils make. However, long-term targets, which challenge and raise expectations for pupils, are not set, especially in the lower school. This reduces leaders' ability to track progress over time, for example over a key stage. The in-house system to track progress in augmentative communication is effective and ensures that pupils make strong progress in developing their communication skills.

While there are many strengths in teaching, pupils' independent skills are not sufficiently well developed. Additionally, support staff are not consistently deployed well enough, at individual or small-group level, to maximise their impact on pupils' learning.

Improving the level of pupil attendance has been a strong focus over the last year. As a result of work undertaken on attendance, the school has recently achieved the highest level of attendance since the last inspection. However, attendance levels remain below average and leaders have not ensured that all statutory guidance is strictly adhered to, especially with regard to holidays during term time. Further improvement is also needed in analysing data patterns for absence so that leaders have a clear understanding of where additional work is needed.

Most of the staff team are highly supportive of the changes that have been implemented since the previous inspection. They have confidence that leaders will assist them in their professional development and improve the school further. Staff work well together to ensure that the school is a calm and friendly place where pupils are happy and make strong progress with their social skills, communication and relationships. Staff have a very caring and nurturing manner which helps pupils feel safe.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, supported the view that there are strong links between school and home. They feel that there is a consistent approach to communication and behaviour management strategies across the school. One parent reflected the view of many when they said, 'I feel very fortunate my child has attended Reynolds Cross. I would not hesitate to recommend it to others.'

Pupils enjoy school. Pupils in the upper school told inspectors that they felt safe and were able to describe how they could share any concerns with staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are trained to an appropriate level for their role and are confident in using the systems and procedures to report concerns. They receive feedback on any concerns they raise. Designated staff actively investigate concerns. All incidents are recorded carefully and followed up with the appropriate agencies if required. School leaders and the family support staff ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are given the help they need in a timely manner.

The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the well-being of pupils are clear and highly effective. The designated safeguarding leader demonstrates a detailed knowledge of pupils and fully understands their role and the responsibilities of all staff. It is evident from records and discussions that staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to keep children safe. Child protection records are of a good quality and are securely stored.

Some governors have received the latest safeguarding training and have a good knowledge of their responsibilities. There are plans in place to ensure that all governors receive the latest safeguarding training.

Inspection findings

- The new assessment system has been received well by staff and appropriate training has been put in place. This system enables targets to be set for the small steps of progress which leaders measure. The improved rigour of tracking has allowed the school to reflect on previous assessment practice and improve the accuracy of baseline assessments.
- The short-term progress targets set for pupils are appropriately linked to individual learning plans and each pupil's education, health and care plan. This has enabled a more individual approach to target setting and measuring progress in each academic year. The targets are often unique to the individual pupil and are regularly monitored.
- Leaders do not set long-term targets for pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3. This restricts their ability to measure progress across a key stage. Leaders were unable to define what constituted good progress for younger pupils. As a result, not all pupils are stretched and challenged sufficiently to achieve their potential.
- The curriculum does not fully meet the needs of pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3. Pupils' independent skills are not developed well enough. A small number of parents, through the parental survey, indicated that their child would benefit from a more life-skills based curriculum, which they believed would support them to become more independent.
- The school has a clear view of expected progress through the 14 to 19 curriculum. The visually rich environment in the 14 to 19 pathway supports pupils to become more independent. The curriculum for these pupils has been designed to effectively prepare them for their next steps in education. This is achieved through a curriculum that is centred around active work experience, work-based activities, careers advice and real-life experiences. As a result, pupils are challenged, and all pupils consistently continue successfully in education post-19.
- Where learning is most effective, pupils are engaged in experiential, hands-on or physical activities. This approach enables pupils to experience the world around them and respond to it. When supported well by staff, it enables them to make strong progress, be challenged and clearly show their enjoyment of learning. Occasionally, staff are not always deployed effectively to promote learning. This restricts the support pupils receive and slows their progress.
- Improving the level of pupil attendance has been a strong focus for you and your leadership team over the last year. You have worked closely with governors, the local authority, external agencies and parents to improve attendance. You have changed systems and your recent investment in a new system for recording attendance has enabled you to analyse and explore data gathered. As a result of work undertaken, the school has recently achieved the highest level of attendance since the last inspection. However, attendance remains below the national average and leaders have not ensured that all statutory guidance is

strictly adhered to, especially with regard to holidays during term time. As a new system has been recently introduced, analysis and evaluation of attendance data are in their infancy. Reports produced do not yet focus on the impact of actions taken.

- The leadership team has made a positive start to integrating the Green Lane provision into the school. This includes ensuring that the school's systems and approach to education are adopted by all staff. As a result, the provision is now being used successfully as a nursery with strong management oversight and good links with the main school.
- Governors have an excellent overview of the school's effectiveness. They are confident in the new leadership structure and now feel better informed about the school's performance. This is because of school leaders' honest and transparent approach about what is working well and what needs further development. Consequently, governors are effective in holding you and other leaders to account for your work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' learning in key stages 1, 2 and 3 is improved further by:
 - setting long-term targets for academic, social and communication progress which challenge and stretch pupils to make good progress
 - deploying support staff more effectively
 - providing opportunities to develop pupils' independence and life skills to better prepare them for the next phase of their education.
- attendance rates improve further by making sure that:
 - attendance policies and procedures reflect current statutory guidance, including that relating to holidays in term time
 - leaders use the data generated by the new system to measure the impact of actions taken.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Field
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, your deputy headteacher and members of the governing body including the chair. We visited lessons across the school with you and your senior team and scrutinised a number of pupils' books across a range of subjects. An inspector visited your off-site nursery provision.

We considered the views of parents who contacted inspectors directly, the nine written responses to the parents' inspection questionnaire and the 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

We spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and school experiences.

We met with staff to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection and considered the views of staff from the 29 responses to the inspection questionnaire.

We scrutinised a number of school documents including the school's development plan and self-evaluation document. Safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including the checks on staff's suitability to work with children were considered. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance were evaluated.