

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 February 2018

Mr Warren Harrison
Headteacher
The Premier Academy
Saffron Street
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK2 3AH

Dear Mr Harrison

Short inspection of The Premier Academy

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Margaret Louisy, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the progress pupils make has increased significantly. For the last two years, pupils have made well above average progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, the proportions of pupils who achieve standards above those expected for their age are higher than regional and national figures. Tailored support ensures that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are assisted well and make strong progress from their starting points. Similarly, high-quality teaching and assessment ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress to attain higher standards than other pupils nationally.

In lessons pupils have very positive attitudes and they work hard. They are encouraged to take considerable care and pride in their presentation and in making their work the best it can be. The school site is meticulously clean and well kept with many high-quality displays of pupils' work. Pupils respect each other's ideas and they work and play very well together. There is a sense of teamwork at the

school. Older pupils told me with pride how they relish becoming actively involved in the life of the school through their roles in school council, as a prefect or supporting younger children by acting as 'helping hands' at breaktimes.

Leaders' detailed self-evaluation of the school is carefully considered. As a result, staff share a pride in the school's strengths and are sharply focused on the areas the school can improve further. Clear planning and effective monitoring ensure that leaders are taking the right actions to make these improvements. For example, leaders rightly prioritised raising standards in key stage 2 mathematics and invested in extra staffing, training and resources in Years 5 and 6 to achieve this. Year 5 pupils told me with pride how much they feel their mathematics has improved recently as a result of these changes.

Governors are a dedicated team, some of whom have supported the school for many years. They pay regular visits to the school and are kept up to date via leaders' detailed tracking and reports. Governors are actively involved in monitoring activities, setting targets for yourself and senior leaders and supporting school improvements. Leaders and governors are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that the school website meets all requirements including the publication of the latest school policies. They are currently working to achieve this.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders ensure that the school has robust safeguarding arrangements and that there are well-understood systems to manage safeguarding requirements. There is a culture of vigilance at the school, and detailed records are carefully maintained. Leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate and up-to-date training so that they can spot and deal with any problems quickly. Leaders are proactive, liaising with external agencies, and challenging where necessary, to ensure that timely and appropriate support is sourced for vulnerable pupils.

You recognise that some groups of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, had poor attendance rates in the past. Leaders promote the value of good attendance well and have worked closely with parents, carers and outside agencies to support improvements effectively. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, confirmed that their children felt safe here. However, a small minority of parents expressed their frustration about the quality of communication from leaders. Acutely aware of this, you have identified appropriate strategies in your improvement plans to develop communication between the school and hard-to-reach parents. This work is ongoing.

Pupils report that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet. Pupils know who to go to should they have any concerns, which they trust staff to resolve. Midday supervisors confidently recall recent training relating to behaviour and safety routines. They ensure that break and lunchtimes are orderly and that children socialise well together.

Inspection findings

- A rich, vibrant and engaging curriculum, coupled with teachers' high expectations, ensures that The Premier Academy is a hive of activity. In addition to the excellent provision in the core subjects, leaders have invested in a range of first-class facilities and specialist teaching in music, dance, Spanish and computer programming. As a result, teachers have developed high-quality resources which they share with other schools, and pupils gain opportunities to participate in regional and national events. Across the school, classroom-based learning activities are enriched by a wide variety of clubs and regular trips and excursions. For example, during this inspection many of Year 3 were off site enjoying a horse-riding experience.
- Provision of such a wide range of exciting and stimulating learning activities helps to foster an aspirational culture in which pupils are keen to excel. As one parent commented:

'Great school providing a wide range of learning styles to suit the different educational needs of the children. Lots of extra-curricular activities offered free of charge led by committed and passionate specialist teachers. My children are proud to attend this school, feeling safe, happy and motivated to keep growing and learning.'
- Effective use of additional funding makes a real difference to the progress that pupils make in all year groups. Staff at The Premier Academy know each pupil particularly well. Understanding their individual needs, teachers and teaching assistants adapt tasks to ensure that learning is appropriately pitched. Effective planning enables leaders to ensure that all available resources are deployed to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that these groups make strong progress over time.
- Leaders have developed and implemented clear planning and assessment systems for reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Subject leaders work with teachers to share ideas and approaches and to moderate pupils' work across the year groups. Regular monitoring allows leaders to track the progress of individual pupils and to challenge teachers to improve standards still further. Staff work together to ensure that the effective teaching of phonics helps to foster a passion for reading, and underpins the good progress that pupils make. Pupils' work over time demonstrates the strong progress they make in mathematics, English and the wider curriculum in key stages 1 and 2.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of early years has improved significantly over recent years and is above the national average figure. The indoor learning environments offer well-organised, rich and stimulating learning opportunities. Children gain confidence from their good relationships with staff, and collaborative play with others in their class. Leaders are aware that the outdoor learning space is limited and that more needs to be done to enrich provision for children's learning in this area.
- Leaders' rigorous monitoring and improved liaison with families have ensured that overall attendance has improved over time and is above national figures.

Aware that last year the attendance of those who have SEN and/or disabilities was below average, leaders have taken appropriate actions to address this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve communication with parents
- the external learning environment for early years is developed to offer a wider range of learning activities.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, middle leaders, other staff and members of the governing body. Jointly with leaders, we visited classrooms in each year group to look at teaching and learning. We looked at a range of pupils' work in their exercise books and listened to a small group of pupils read. We observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and around the school, and held meetings with two small groups of pupils. We considered 117 responses to Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. We also considered the views represented in 58 responses to a staff survey and 21 responses to a pupil survey. We evaluated a range of documents, including pupils' progress information and safeguarding policies, procedures and records.