

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



7 July 2016

Miss Kira Nicholls  
St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding  
Queen's Road  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 2JQ

Dear Miss Nicholls

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding**

Following my visit to your school on 21 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in February 2014, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

#### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders and representatives of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the education adviser who is supporting the school on behalf of the local authority. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's most recent self-evaluation and information regarding pupils' attainment and progress. We observed learning across the school together and I observed learning in the early years with the leader for the early years. We also scrutinised samples of pupils' work.

## **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the Year 4 teacher has left the school. The Year 4 class is being taught by a temporary teacher who will join the school on a permanent basis from September 2016.

## **Main findings**

Pupils are receiving a better quality of education than they were at the time of the last monitoring inspection. More of the teaching over time is good and pupils are making better progress than before.

Strong leadership by the early years leader, who took up post last September, is making a clear difference to outcomes for children by the end of the early years. This year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased. Improvements have been secured in areas of learning where, previously, attainment was weaker, such as in speaking and writing. The early years environment has been enhanced and children are benefiting from increased opportunities for children to develop their communication and language skills. These improvements are also enhancing children's personal, social and emotional development. The changes made are making a clear difference to all of the children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. The children are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

The report from my previous monitoring inspection highlighted the very poor results in the national phonics screening check last year. I was also critical of the time it had taken to implement the changes necessary to improve the teaching of early reading. I am pleased to report that the teaching of early reading has since been transformed. As a result of the excellent work done to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sound they represent), including through the strong leadership of the subject leader, far higher proportions of Year 1 pupils are now meeting the standard expected. Almost all of the pupils who did not meet the standard last year have now caught up. The teaching and support staff have responded with enthusiasm and commitment to the new phonics curriculum. The strong systems of assessment are ensuring small-group teaching is very well matched to the needs of individual children. The phonics teaching we observed was effective, including the teaching delivered by the well-trained teaching assistants.

The overall quality of teaching at the school has improved since the last monitoring inspection. Your own records and the work we looked at in pupils' books show that pupils are receiving more consistently good teaching than before. The new Year 4 class teacher is already making a strong contribution to the progress pupils in Year 4 are making. You have put support in place to tackle the remaining teaching that needs to improve, and are closely monitoring the difference this support is making.

Your teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 indicate that fewer pupils have met age-related expectations than should have. This, in part, is due to some of the complex needs of the group. However, you recognise that it is also because the teaching they have received has not always been good enough in the past. It is essential that you retain a sharp focus on teaching, particularly in key stage 1, to ensure that the recent improvements to teaching quality and, consequently, to pupils' progress are built on and accelerated. The school's assessment information indicates that higher proportions of pupils are meeting the standards expected for their age by the end of key stage 2. This reflects the better teaching these pupils have received during key stage 2.

The school's middle leaders are playing a key role in bringing about the improvements needed. The restructuring of the school's leadership arrangements, which you undertook last year, is reaping rewards. Middle leaders have grown both in skills and in confidence, and understand well how to carry out their roles. They are sharply focused on ensuring all of the actions they take make enough difference to pupils' achievement. Leadership of provision for pupils who have special education needs or disability has also improved strongly. Staff are working much more effectively than before to identify how best to meet the needs of pupils who are falling behind, with regular checks in place to make sure the actions taken are making enough difference. These strategies are resulting in this group of pupils making better progress than before.

Since the last monitoring inspection, governors have strengthened their systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The minutes from meetings of the governing body show that governors have become more confident in challenging the school to do better. Clerking arrangements have improved. The recent recruitment of a highly effective and experienced governor from another school has added much more sharpness to the governors' questioning. Nevertheless, while governors are proving to be more effective than before, their work is hindered by their difficulties in recruiting enough governors so that monitoring responsibilities can be shared.

### **External support**

You value the external support you receive very highly. This has included the regular visits from an education adviser, brokered by the local authority. These visits have helped you to identify, precisely, the aspects of teaching which need to improve. They have also contributed to the improvements seen in the quality of middle leadership and governance. The local authority's recruitment of a highly skilled and knowledgeable governor to support the governance of the school is having a clear impact on strengthening governance.

The local authority's arrangements for supporting school improvement are set to change at the end of the current academic year. I strongly recommend that the level of support and challenge currently in place is maintained to ensure that the increased pace of improvement since the last monitoring inspection is sustained.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**