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Liz Felsing
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Dear Ms Felsing

Short inspection of St Nicholas C of E Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017, 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival at the school four years ago, you have set about strengthening leadership and creating a team that shares your passionate commitment to drive the school forward. You have created an outward-looking school where staff are keen to learn from visits to other schools and from working with colleagues. Your effective work, and that of your deputy, in supporting other schools has also been used as a learning opportunity. Discussions in staff meetings and regular monitoring of teaching and learning all focus on sharing 'what works'. Leaders are highly ambitious for each and every pupil, with a clear emphasis on developing the whole child. As a result, pupils flourish and make good progress across the curriculum. Parents and carers recognise the significant contribution you make to the school and the progress that their children make.

Staff members listen to pupils' views. Pupils are encouraged to share in the development of their school by undertaking a range of roles, including global reporters, prefects and 'eco-energy boosters'. Pupils told me how much they value the thought that has gone into providing a variety of activities at playtimes. They enjoy using the friendship garden, where they play imaginative games with younger pupils and build bug hotels. They appreciate the 'koinonia' area where they can be inside and play board games. Pupils enjoy learning, especially on special days, such as the recent history day, when they dress up. As one pupil stated, 'we have so much fun, you don't realise you are learning'. They know that teachers will provide help when it is needed, and relish the range of challenges presented to them.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school, including good teaching and the positive behaviour and attitudes of pupils around the school. These aspects remain strong. Pupils are polite and well behaved in and around the school. The culture and ethos of the school is very positive and underpinned by strong, shared values.

Previously, inspectors identified a need to improve the quality of teaching in key stage 2 so that it promotes equally rapid progress for all pupils in English and mathematics. In 2016, progress for Year 6 pupils was above national rates in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics was in line with that of pupils nationally. Leaders have effectively ensured that standards in writing have improved and match the expectations of the new national curriculum. You have rightly identified mathematics as a focus area on the school development plan. The mathematics leader is an expert in her subject area and is supporting teachers effectively to implement the new mathematics programmes. The results of this are beginning to be seen in pupils' work. However, there are occasions during lessons when pupils' misconceptions are not corrected swiftly enough to support rapid progress. You acknowledge that it will take time to ensure that the very highest standards in mathematics are in place across all year groups and for all groups of pupils.

In the last report, inspectors also identified a need to ensure that standards in writing were high across the curriculum. Leaders regularly look at pupils' work to check that the wider curriculum matches pupils' needs and that all curricular areas are covered. Leaders have effectively highlighted subject-specific words to help pupils to use appropriate terms in different subjects. There is more work to do to ensure that this vocabulary is used in areas such as scientific conclusions and to ensure that pupils' spelling and punctuation reach the same high standards as their use of grammar. While the school works effectively to promote and support pupils' regular attendance, you recognise that a small number of pupils remain absent too often: you have the right actions in place to address this.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping pupils safe, and helping them to understand how to keep themselves safe is at the heart of all that you do. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors regularly carry out their role in monitoring this. You keep meticulous records that support referrals to other agencies in a timely and well-informed manner. You are tenacious in following up these referrals so that pupils are provided with immediate and appropriate support when necessary. Parents reported that their children are safe in school.

Your commitment in keeping pupils safe is reflected in the high-quality displays around the school that reflect this aspect. Pupils understand the importance of e-safety. They have the opportunity to become 'e-cadets' and do 'good digital deeds'. Pupils told me that they feel safe at school. They know that if they have problems

or worries they could go to a teacher. They trust their teachers to 'sort it out'.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I examined the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe and ensure that they attend school regularly. Leaders have developed a range of appropriate strategies to support the attendance of the few groups of pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should. The welfare manager checks attendance meticulously and provides support for families. You demonstrated to me instances where this support has been highly effective and has had considerable impact. However, you are not complacent and know that attendance for a small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils eligible for free school meals needs to further improve.
- I also considered how well pupils make progress, particularly across key stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 made very good progress in writing in 2016. Effective teaching has ensured that pupils across key stage 2 write for a wide range of purposes. Pupils are encouraged to use their widening vocabulary to make their descriptive writing vivid. Pupils use correct grammar, but standards of punctuation and spelling are not always as high.
- Leaders pay close attention to the progress of the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils have the challenge that they need in lessons. As a result, these pupils' rates of progress are improving in mathematics to match the good progress seen in English, particularly in upper key stage 2. The support for pupils who need to catch up in mathematics is highly effective. Pupils deepen their mathematical knowledge and understanding and grow more confident.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points in most subjects. Leaders ensure that effective support is in place to help pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Leaders check on pupils' progress by observing learning in the classrooms regularly and talking to teachers. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of what is working well and what the next steps are to improve teaching where it is needed, such as support for the teaching of mathematics in some classes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities rises to match that of other pupils
- pupils' progress in mathematics continues to improve across all year groups and for all groups of pupils
- standards of pupils' spelling and punctuation are as high as other aspects of their writing in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Gordon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders in the school and members of the governing body. I also spoke to a member of the local authority on the telephone and met with a representative from the diocese. You accompanied me on most of my visits to classes. During these visits, I spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at their work and heard them read. I spoke to pupils and parents at the start of the school day and also met a group of pupils formally. I took account of 122 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records, including governing body minutes, the school development plan, progress tracking and documents relating to safeguarding.