

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 September 2017

Mrs Victoria Hewitt-Lee
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School, Dukinfield
Westmorland Avenue
Dukinfield
Cheshire
SK16 5JA

Dear Mrs Hewitt-Lee

Short inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Dukinfield

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are a motivating leader who has created a caring and supportive school with a culture of high expectations. You have steered the school through a difficult time with changes in leadership and staffing. Your evaluation of the school is accurate. Teaching and learning have continued to improve since the previous inspection and pupils achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for secondary education.

The school's Christian ethos and motto drives everything that the school does. You are highly visible in the life of the school and know pupils and families well. You are outward-looking and have established strong partnerships with two other local primary schools. This provides opportunities to compare and check teachers' assessments and to improve the help for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The local authority provides good support and challenge, which you welcome.

The school is a harmonious community. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They work well together and relationships are strong. Pupils report that they enjoy school. As one pupil said, 'I love learning here. Teachers always help if you are struggling with anything.'

Teamwork is a strength of the school. Staff take ownership of their areas of

responsibility and buy into your vision. Staff who responded to the online survey are proud to work in the school and feel valued. One teacher commented, 'It's in everyone's heart to want the best for everyone.' Morale among staff is high.

All parents I spoke with were highly positive about the school. A typical comment was, 'This is a lovely, friendly school, which values its children, families and staff alike. We can't fault it.' Every parent who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others.

Governors are committed to the school. One governor commented, 'We want children to come out as well-rounded people and be whatever they want to be.' You are very well supported by governors who know the school inside out. They are rigorous in the challenge they provide and hold school leaders to account. Governors are keen to improve their skills further and attend regular training to ensure that they are up to date.

You have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The senior leadership team has been restructured and now includes phase leaders to ensure that responsibilities are shared. This has enabled greater ownership and provided the drive to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best. Attendance at external courses helps to develop the leadership skills of senior and middle leaders further. Leaders continually monitor pupils' progress and share good practice.

You and your leaders have transformed the outdoor provision in the early years. Adults' careful planning encourages children to be curious, explore and to experiment. The purchase of balanced bikes and climbing walls has further developed children's physical development. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the Reception Year has been steadily improving and was above the national average in 2016 and high in 2017.

As a result of a whole-school focus on writing, including the checking of pupils' work, there has been strong improvement in pupils' attainment and progress. The teaching of grammar and punctuation has improved and pupils' spelling is becoming increasingly more accurate. However, you are aware that more pupils need to achieve greater depth in their writing and improve the presentation of their work.

Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have improved. In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, all pupils made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and progress in reading and mathematics was significantly above the national average. The unvalidated overall progress scores for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are still high in 2017.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a strong safeguarding culture. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. You act as the designated safeguarding lead and you are ably supported in

this role by your assistant headteacher and school business manager. Comprehensive training ensures that staff are aware of the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know how to refer any concerns about a pupil. Vulnerable pupils are very well cared for in your school and their needs are well understood. Liaison with external agencies is regular and ensures that the needs of pupils are met. Pupils say that they feel safe and they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which was the progress made by pupils in writing since the last inspection. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average. The unvalidated overall progress score and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for writing at the end of key stage 2 indicate that they are still high in 2017.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard and greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. You have put in place a range of strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers use 'hooks' to capture pupils' imagination and provide them with the opportunity to write for a purpose. There is a strong focus on pupils editing and improving their written work. My review of your data, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that they are making good progress. However, you have rightly identified in your school improvement plan that not all pupils present their work neatly. You also acknowledge that not enough pupils are reaching the greater depth for standards in writing in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.
- In 2016, the proportion of middle-ability pupils who attained greater depth in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. You have purchased more 'boy-friendly' books, which engage them in their learning. Leaders have improved the partnership with parents to engage them with their children's reading development. You have provided training for staff on reasoning in mathematics. Pupils explain their understanding and provide concrete solutions for abstract questions in mathematics. As a result of these improvements, the overall proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth in reading and mathematics in key stage 1 this year, has improved on last year.
- Finally, I was interested to find out how effectively you use the pupil premium funding to help disadvantaged pupils to achieve their potential in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1. You and other staff have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that they face. Consequently, you are able to support each pupil in a personalised way. In mathematics, pupils apply their knowledge and solve problems enthusiastically. You promote a love of reading in a number of ways. For example, pupils read daily and receive awards for reading. Pupils who read to me were able to sound and blend unknown words. Inspection evidence shows that these pupils are now catching up.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils achieve greater depth of understanding in writing in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2
- the presentation of pupils' work continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and a group of teachers. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Eight pupils from key stage 2 met with me and I spoke with others during breaktimes. I visited a number of classes, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 reading. I carried out a work scrutiny of pupils' work across the school. Parents talked with me as they dropped their children off at school. In addition, I took account of 44 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 43 free-text responses. I also considered the views of 15 staff and 16 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.