

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



21 December 2017

Mrs Nicola James  
Headteacher  
Park Street CofE Primary School  
Lower Park Street  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB5 8AR

Dear Mrs James

### **Short inspection of Park Street CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 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 January 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. From your arrival in April 2017, you have established high expectations regarding what the school should provide for the pupils.

The new leadership team and governors are supporting your initiatives to further improve teaching, learning and standards across the school. You are using the local authority's support well to improve the skills of leaders and teachers. The school's strategic plans set precise targets to improve teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes. Governors are knowledgeable and committed to their work at the school.

Your school is a happy and purposeful place for children to learn. Pupils I spoke to are proud of their school and told me it is a welcoming place for everyone. The school's core values, 'kindness and friendship', 'respect and honesty', and 'learning and fun', mean that pupils are thoughtful, articulate and respectful.

The school offers enriched learning opportunities within the local community, alongside high-quality film-making and musical activities. Children in the early years and key stage 1 pupils enthusiastically joined in their Nativity rehearsal. You ensure that Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their secondary education, and life in modern Britain.

The effective provision in the early years ensures that children learn and play well together. The proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development has

been above the national average for the previous two years. Pupils continue to develop good attitudes to learning across the school. We saw pupils listening intently to teachers and working collaboratively. The clarity of teachers' explanations and pupils' discussions about their learning have improved since the previous inspection.

Pupils enjoy reading, which is a strength of the school. Progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 has been in the top 20% nationally for the past two years for all pupils. In 2017, the progress pupils made in writing in Year 6 improved significantly to rise above the national average.

Most parents who provided responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school. One parental comment summed up the sentiments of many others: 'Park Street is a wonderful little community school. My children feel safe and secure here. They are receiving a unique and special education, not only academically, but also in friendships and social skills.' You and your governors are building up communications with parents, which was an area for improvement at the previous inspection.

Since April, you have implemented a variety of strategies to ensure a greater consistency in teaching and learning to maintain the school's high standards and improve aspects that dipped in 2017. We discussed these in detail. You were able to show how the characteristics and the mobility of pupils impacted on statutory results, due to the small number of pupils in each group and cohort. You ensure that leaders rigorously check teaching and learning, and provide coaching and team teaching opportunities to improve skills where required. Your high expectations ensure that all groups of pupils do well, so that more reach the higher standards in English and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors are well aware of statutory safeguarding duties. Governors monitor that all staff have the appropriate training and recruitment checks to ensure that pupils are safe. As a result, staff are suitably qualified and confident to implement the school's safeguarding policies. Child protection referrals are timely and appropriate. Safeguarding documentation is well organised and detailed. You have been proactive in strengthening protocols to secure pupils' safety, including implementing new procedures at the beginning of the school day.

Pupils I spoke to told me that they feel safe in school, and when walking to and playing on Jesus Green. They explained the importance of everyone following the rules and staying within the set boundaries. Pupils feel safer when the adults wear bright high-visibility jackets as they can see them clearly. We observed pupils' enjoyment of playing in an open space, which is a great contrast to the school's small outside area. Adults were very vigilant of pupils and people using this area. Older pupils were proud to support younger children on the walk. You and your governors are constantly reviewing the related risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe at all times.

Pupils who spoke to me said that bullying was not a problem in the school, and that there were adults that they would go to if they had any concerns. They could explain the differences between bullying and rough play, and how to be safe when using the internet.

## **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry was to investigate what leaders have put in place to halt the decline in pupils' progress in mathematics in 2017 from the end of Year 2 to Year 6, which is now exactly the same as the national average.
- You and your leaders have introduced different teaching techniques and new resources to support teachers' planning and ensure coverage of the mathematics curriculum. The mathematics leader is a strong practitioner who is supporting staff to improve teaching and learning across the school.
- Currently, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are taught separately so that experienced staff can focus on the appropriate 'three challenges' for their chronological age. We saw different ability groups being challenged well. For example, a group of Year 6 boys confidently explained how they could use their existing knowledge about coordinates to work out difficult tasks.
- Across key stage 2, pupils are using multiplication facts to improve their accuracy and pace in working out calculations. Evidence from the school's monitoring of teaching and learning and work in pupils' books indicate that most key stage 2 pupils are making good progress in mathematics from their various September starting points. More pupils are working at and towards the higher standard.
- My second line of enquiry looked at writing in key stage 1 and Year 3. This is because in 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils who attained the expected standard declined to below the national average.
- You were quick to identify concerns in writing for Year 2 pupils last summer. Using your expertise as a former English lead, you ensured that these pupils completed an intensive writing programme during the last half of the summer term. However, this was too late to impact on the statutory assessment.
- Through a focus on spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar, with many opportunities to write at length across the curriculum, these pupils, now in Year 3, are making better progress in their writing skills.
- Additionally, you and your leaders are carefully checking pupils' writing across the school, especially in key stage 1. Underachievement is quickly identified and targeted support is put in place to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. Already, some Year 2 pupils are working at a good standard.
- My third line of enquiry considered provision for the teaching of phonics in key stage 1 and the early years. This is because in 2017, the school's results in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined to below the national average for the first time in three years.
- Again, you have taken swift action, adopting a new approach to phonics based on exciting, stimulating texts to raise standards. We observed pupils in Years 1

and 2 enthusiastically following the chosen text and identifying relevant sounds. They were able to discuss different spellings for the same sound. All pupils receive quality teaching from the phonics leader before moving to different tasks according to their ability.

- The school's assessments indicate that Year 1 pupils are making good progress in their learning of phonics. We saw children in the early years and Year 1 pupils using their knowledge of phonics to write lists in the Post Office and the Christmas Shop.
- My final key line of enquiry was to investigate how governors have improved the effectiveness of their visits to school and how communication with parents has improved. This was identified in the previous inspection report.
- Governors produce a structured monitoring timetable for checking the actions of the school's development plan. This includes visits relevant to their allocated responsibilities. A detailed report on these visits is shared at the next governing body meeting. Consequently, governors are able to ask pertinent questions about all aspects of school life to support further school improvement.
- As a new headteacher, you are building up communication links with parents. The school's regular newsletter informs parents about the work of your school and includes a 'governors' corner'.
- Evaluation of a recent positive parental survey has led you to question parents more deeply about homework, to inform the school's homework policy review. Additionally, some parents are working on the school's new anti-bullying policy, which will consider the views of pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and governors. You also provide celebration assemblies, open afternoons, and text and email services to keep parents informed about school life.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recently introduced teaching and learning approaches are consistently implemented across the school to further improve pupils' attainment and progress, enabling more pupils to attain the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

- I met with you, other leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- I spoke with a group of pupils.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement.
- I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- I visited all classrooms within the school to observe learning and scrutinised the work in pupils' books.
- I took account of the views of one staff member and 25 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Parental views from the free-text service were also considered.