

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



14 March 2018

Mrs Liz Wombwell  
Headteacher  
St John's Primary School  
Pendleton Road  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 6QG

Dear Mrs Wombwell

### **Short inspection of St John's Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 2018, 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 previous inspection. Since you joined as headteacher at the start of last year, you and your leaders have sustained a very positive and warm atmosphere within which pupils feel happy. They enjoy school and all it has to offer.

Staff are proud to work here and almost all parents responding to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, are happy with the quality of education the school provides. These parents are also very positive in their written comments about the school, saying, for example, that, 'It is a wonderful school, with excellent leadership and dedicated, supportive and nurturing teachers.'

Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused well on the areas for improvement identified in the report. Pupils now have access to a wide range of methods and materials to help them to tackle mathematical calculations. Teachers and support staff benefit from training that helps them to understand better how mathematical knowledge and skills develop over time. Pupils reach high standards in writing across the curriculum, including in presentation and handwriting. Leaders' effectiveness and pupils' behaviour continue to be strengths of the school.

Children in the early years are thriving and have been achieving consistently, at or above the national average, over the last four years. As we walked around the Reception class, the strong development of children's writing was very evident, with many children stopping us to talk about the dinosaur egg that they had discovered. Children, even those you know to be 'reluctant writers', were enthusiastically writing

about it, and were very keen to share their work.

Pupils do well in key stage 1. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are above those seen nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching a greater depth of understanding in reading and writing is at or above the national average. Leaders have rightly identified that a larger proportion of key stage 1 pupils who are disadvantaged or have low prior attainment could be working at the expected standard in mathematics.

Performance across key stage 2 is very strong in reading and mathematics, with pupils making good progress. Pupils' performance in writing has been mixed over recent years, with a dip in attainment and, more notably, progress in 2016. Leaders analysed results and have an accurate and detailed understanding of pupils' learning. This has informed your actions and ensured that you are focusing on the right things in order to raise achievement further. As a result, attainment in writing rose in 2017 to above the national average, and rates of progress improved to in line with national figures. Current pupils continue to make good progress in writing.

Numbers of disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities within each year group are small. You are careful not to publish information which could identify individual pupils. However, you recognise the importance of identifying all groups and tracking progress carefully from different starting points, so that the impact of additional funding can be fully analysed.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils feel safe in school, and almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are well looked after. Staff place a high emphasis on pupils' well-being, and notice even small changes in pupils which might suggest that they are not happy or in need of support. This means that leaders are able to take swift action to resolve any concerns or issues relating to pupils' safety or welfare.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders carry out effective checks on all adults working in the school to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Visitors are vetted appropriately. Useful training means that staff are well prepared to deal with any issues or concerns. Pupils are also taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Pupils reported that bullying was very rare. Those spoken to said they were very confident that they could report incidents to a responsible adult and that the matter would be dealt with effectively. Any alleged incidents are fully investigated by leaders. Information is recorded thoroughly and securely.

### **Inspection findings**

- Staff are making good use of training to raise standards in mathematics in key stage 1. Teachers now use visual methods to help pupils understand complex or abstract mathematical ideas and to help them to apply their knowledge of number facts. However, some pupils, particularly those who are lower attaining and some who are disadvantaged, are slow to recall these facts when doing calculations and solving problems.
- Following last year's writing assessments at the end of key stage 2, you and your leadership team identified weaknesses in pupils' spelling. Much work has been done to improve spelling skills across the school, with teachers providing helpful, supporting resources and more focused home learning. It is clear that pupils are becoming more accurate in their spelling when writing across the curriculum. However, the use of correct spelling remains an issue for many pupils and we agreed that the school needs to continue its focus on this area.
- Leaders and staff know pupils well, including those who are disadvantaged. The school team provides good support to help most disadvantaged pupils to achieve successfully. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' levels of attainment and set them challenging targets. Evidence seen in books and individual assessment information clearly shows that most disadvantaged pupils across the school are currently making good progress. However, leaders do not track the progress of different groups of disadvantaged pupils' progress strategically from their starting points, or identify the main barriers to their achievement. This restricts leaders' ability to fully evaluate the impact of their actions to accelerate their progress.
- The level of attendance has been rising over four years and is above the national average for primary schools. However, over the same period, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils fell and was lower than the national figure in 2016. You have worked with families and introduced measures to raise the profile of good attendance. As a result of this work, the attendance of pupils who are disadvantaged has started to improve and is currently above the national average for all primary pupils. Persistent absence rates are below the national average but you continue to work with individual families to improve them even more.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, particularly those who are low attaining at key stage 1, can quickly recall and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems with confidence
- outcomes of groups of pupils, no matter how small, are reviewed more precisely, so that leaders know whether their actions to raise standards are effective and represent good value for money
- the recent focus on improving spelling skills is sustained, so that pupils' spelling is consistently accurate.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Goodwin  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, and members of the governing body. I met with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6 and spoke with many other pupils informally. Together, we observed learning across the school. I looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of responses to questionnaires from 61 pupils and 30 staff. I also considered 77 responses from parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including free-text comments.