

# St Nicholas Primary School

Raymund Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 0PJ

## Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a culture of high expectations for all pupils.
- Governors have a clear strategic vision for the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have embedded effective systems to check on teaching. This has ensured that the quality of teaching has been sustained and all staff are committed to raising standards.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge enables them to ask pupils searching questions across a wide range of subjects.
- Children in the early years have a varied and rich curriculum. Leaders have ensured that teaching is effective. Consequently, children make rapid progress.
- Children achieve well in Reception. Pupils make good progress by the end of Year 2 and during key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. They receive effective support that meets their needs.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Consequently, pupils show respect and consideration for others.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a cohesive community and relationships are well developed.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after, and that they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and recognise that the changes being made are improving its effectiveness.
- Pupils' skills in writing are not as strong as those in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough time to write extended pieces of work.
- Teachers plan learning well. However, in writing, learning activities do not build pupils' skills systematically. This limits their progress in writing.
- There are times when the level of challenge does not stretch pupils' thinking sufficiently, particularly for the most able.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - teachers plan learning that challenges all pupils at an appropriate level, particularly for the most able pupils
  - pupils are given more opportunities to write at greater length, so that they can use and apply their writing skills more frequently
  - teachers plan learning activities that enable pupils to develop their writing skills in a more systematic way.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils. The headteacher and senior leaders have worked together effectively to create an aspirational culture. As a result, the curriculum is engaging, and pupils achieve well.
- The headteacher has an insightful view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders' improvement plans identify clear and appropriate priorities based on their rigorous monitoring of the impact of the school's work. There are already clear signs of improvement as a result of this work.
- Senior and middle leaders use lesson observations and their analysis of pupils' work well to check the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Leaders take appropriate and swift action on any weak teaching. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching is improving further.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a clear purpose for learning. Pupils enjoy regular educational visits to museums and places of interest, linked well to their learning in class. The before- and after-school club provision includes a wide range of enjoyable activities in a safe environment. Most pupils regularly take advantage of the wide array of other clubs which include electronics, football and athletics. One parent, representing the views of others, said: 'The extra-curricular provision of music education, orchestra and athletics, in particular, is excellent.'
- Teachers and teaching assistants are trained and supported well. Staff feel valued and respected by leaders. Leaders provide many opportunities for professional development. For example, leaders encourage staff to share and learn from good practice within the school and in other local schools.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They plan good opportunities to link this with pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils experience democracy, as well as showing respect for others' views, when voting for their school council.
- Pupils also demonstrate a strong sense of respect and tolerance through their behaviour in class and around the school. These values are taught through well-planned assemblies and connections made with the school's own values of 'Live, Love, Learn and be Happy'. Pupils have a good understanding about other parts of the world, different religions and a wide range of cultures through music and art.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to diminish the differences between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those for other pupils. Leaders monitor the progress of this group of pupils carefully. This enables them to provide good support for disadvantaged pupils and to make appropriate adaptations to learning where needed.
- Leaders use additional funding to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Programmes to help these pupils are planned carefully. When necessary, external and specialist advice and guidance are organised to ensure that staff meet and understand pupils' needs fully.

- Leaders ensure that the primary physical education and sport premium is spent well. The funding has provided good training for staff, and has increased participation in team sports, competitions and after-school sports activities. Consequently, it has raised the quality of teaching and the profile of sports across the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They work effectively to fulfil their responsibilities and are ambitious for the pupils. During the past year, they have received and acted upon training from the local authority and made sure that the school is improving.
- Governors meet with subject leaders and senior leaders to ensure that the full governing body is well informed about improvements. As a result, governors have a detailed understanding of the school's performance. They support and challenge leaders about a wide range of aspects of the school's work.
- Governors check the use of school finance carefully. They check carefully the impact of the additional government funding for various groups of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Governors are well aware of the positive impact of the physical education and sport funding on teachers' skill and pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff know the pupils and their families well and ensure that their needs are met. Consequently, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for. Parents and carers agree that their children are looked after well.
- Staff are well trained and are quick to record their concerns if they are worried about a pupil, and pass this information to senior leaders in a timely manner. This enables senior leaders to make referrals to external agencies swiftly.
- The school site is safe and secure, and staff are highly visible at the start and the end of the day. Senior leaders have received training on how to recruit staff safely, and all required employment checks are in place.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers ask questions that probe pupils' understanding in detail and challenge them appropriately. Teachers use pupils' responses to ensure that additional questions stretch their thinking further. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and to use their reasoning skills to explain their answers.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide clear explanations for pupils. As a result, pupils understand what they need to do in order to be successful. This enables pupils to make good progress. However, there are still times when the expectation of what pupils can achieve is too low. Consequently, pupils, particularly the most able pupils, complete tasks that are sometimes too easy. This means that the pace of learning slows.

- Teaching in the resource base for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder is effective. Staff use a wide range of apparatus to develop the pupils' understanding and knowledge in different subjects. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Phonics teaching is good. As a result, low-attaining pupils are able to use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words accurately. The most able pupils read challenging texts that deepen their thinking. Teachers ensure that pupils read books that sustain their interest and enrich their vocabulary.
- In mathematics, pupils are developing strong skills in calculating, using a variety of methods. Pupils solve problems accurately using this knowledge. Tasks are appropriately challenging, and this means that pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils use a wide range of resources and writing prompts to develop the quality of their writing. They apply grammar, punctuation and spelling skills well to produce good-quality writing. Pupils' skills in writing are good but are not as well developed as in reading and mathematics. Occasionally, learning activities do not build pupils' writing skills systematically. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length and make use of all their writing skills. Because of this, their progress in writing is not as strong as it could be.
- Pupils' work shows that teachers' planning in a wide range of subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, is deepening pupils' understanding. Pupils are moved on at the appropriate times when they have developed an in-depth understanding of current work.
- Leaders and other staff have developed a wide variety of additional support to meet the learning needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils' learning needs effectively within the classroom. Pupils also benefit from additional and effective catch-up programmes in reading, writing and number skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils talked confidently about how the school teaches them to keep safe. Pupils were able to define clearly their understanding of bullying and agreed that bullying is rare in their school. They know what they would do if bullying occurred and say that it would be dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They enter classrooms in a calm and purposeful manner, ready to learn. Pupils collaborate well in lessons. Occasionally, a few pupils lose concentration in lessons when work is not challenging enough. However, this does not disturb the learning of others.
- Pupils said that they enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils are very clear that staff are readily available to deal with any worries they might have. In lessons and assemblies, pupils learn about how to stay safe. For example, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Leaders are successful in articulating the school's values and celebrating diversity as a

strength. This is integral to the way that pupils see their school, promotes positive citizenship and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. One parent said: 'The school is value led; diversity is celebrated, which represents the real world we live in.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and are keen to share their ideas. They have positive attitudes to learning. One pupil said: 'I just love learning here at this school.'
- Pupils move around school sensibly and quietly when lessons take place in different parts of the school, for example when working in the library. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it well.
- Pupils behave well at breaktime and lunchtime. There are good opportunities for them to play a wide range of games. They are supervised appropriately, and adults encourage pupils to join in with each other. Pupils play positively together and take turns to share equipment.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of those who are disadvantaged, is improving and is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to support and challenge families to get their children to school more regularly.
- Parents report that behaviour is good and that their children feel safe. Parents feel that communication between home and school is good and teachers are willing to listen to any questions or concerns that they may have. Parents welcome and like the information and guidance that they receive through helpful workshops and social events.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Leaders monitor the progress of all groups of pupils closely. School assessment information shows that current pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also confirmed by the quality of work in pupils' books. Almost all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are taught well and make good progress.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. Pupils' work shows that the large majority of current pupils are working at the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth is increasing and more pupils are achieving the higher standards. This shows that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on reading. Phonics teaching has supported pupils to develop strong early reading skills. The use of high-quality texts has improved pupils' progress in key stage 2. Pupils read purposefully and widely for research and their own pleasure. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in reading.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good but not as rapid as in reading and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities write with clarity and an understanding of their audience. Leaders recognise that pupils need to make more rapid progress so that they achieve the

higher standards of which they are capable.

- In mathematics, pupils make strong progress. They tackle challenging problems which require them to consider carefully, record methodically and think deeply about their work. As a result, pupils undertake their work in a systematic manner.
- The most able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. For example, they use their strong grammar and punctuation skills to write interesting and lively texts and are able to write for different purposes and audiences. Occasionally, they are not challenged well enough to attain the highest standards.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress was below that of other pupils nationally, particularly in writing. Leaders and teachers ensure that, if any begin to fall behind, bespoke intervention is put into place to help them catch up. Current disadvantaged pupils make good progress because additional funding is spent carefully on support that is effective. Disadvantaged pupils with specific gaps in learning have a programme of help that is planned in detail and checked thoroughly.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders and teachers track their achievement rigorously. Staff ensure that the support and guidance provided to improve these pupils' learning have a positive impact. Consequently, their attainment is rising quickly.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a calm and purposeful environment. Children enjoy the rich range of opportunities. For example, children were highly engaged when reading a wide variety of stories in the 'reading tree'. Their positive attitudes to learning give them a good start to their early education.
- Leaders have an exceptionally clear understanding of children's starting points. This means that the provision for early reading, writing and number meets a wide range of learning needs well. For example, the teaching of phonics and the early stages of writing is strong in the Nursery and this continues into the Reception Year.
- Children settle quickly into the early years. Relationships between adults and children are very good and lead to a secure, friendly and caring environment. Children from the additional resource base make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because they receive good support as they tackle the comprehensive range of learning opportunities.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults regularly assess how well children are learning and identify if they need more help or further challenge. Staff use this information to carefully plan activities that meet children's individual needs well. This means that children make strong progress in their learning and development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The indoor learning environment is bright and stimulating. Resources are of a high quality, and children access them independently. Provision in the outdoor learning area is also strong. The range of well-chosen resources enables children to become capable in all areas of the early years curriculum.
- Children behave well and work together sensibly, especially in the construction areas, where they help each other to build models and share their learning to refine their

designs. They are keen to help each other when learning phonics and reading together.

- The early years pupil premium is appropriately targeted to provide children with the support they need to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Leaders offer parents good opportunities to be involved with their children's learning. For example, there are informative and regular workshops to provide guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. Parents value these opportunities and a high proportion attend the sessions.



## School details

Unique reference number	123021
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10040701

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shilpa Bhatt
Headteacher	Paula Phillips
Telephone number	01865 242838
Website	<a href="http://www.stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk/">www.stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk">headteacher@stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 October 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards of 2017, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher took up post from September 2017. The deputy headteacher started in January 2017.

- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the governing body.
- The school has specially resourced provision in an additional resource base for 15 pupils who have autism spectrum disorder.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 parts of lessons.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 69 responses to Parent View were taken into account, including 60 free-text comments.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; the behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding and the progress and attainment of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders and representatives from the governing body and spoke with an officer from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector

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