

St Nicholas Primary School

Cottingham Road, Kingston-upon-Hull HU6 7RH

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders set high expectations for pupils and staff. They model positive relationships and are highly respected by parents and carers, who value the strong sense of community and belonging the school provides.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils' achievement. They have taken prompt action to address a dip in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2017.
- Staff are incredibly proud to work at the school. There is a thriving culture of teamwork. Staff learn from, and provide support for, each other.
- Teachers and leaders flourish due to the professional development they receive from the multi-academy trust.
- Current pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. An increasing proportion are reaching age-related expectations.
- Children get off to a positive start in Reception. They make good progress from their typically low starting points. Boys' achievement is improving.
- A wider team of middle leaders and subject leaders is becoming more effective in raising standards in members' different areas of responsibility.
- Governors are well equipped to provide effective challenge and support for leaders.
- Leaders for English and mathematics have introduced new approaches to teaching. These have successfully improved attainment and progress throughout the school this academic year. These improved outcomes now need to be sustained.
- Leaders ensure that the care and welfare of pupils are paramount. This results in a harmonious school community. Pupils behave well, feel safe and are valued as individuals.
- The curriculum is effective. A broad range of learning opportunities across the wider curriculum, beyond English and mathematics, supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Remaining inconsistency in the quality of teaching is being addressed by leaders. However, learning and progress for the affected pupils need to accelerate.
- Pupils who are not on track with early reading do not always have the right books or enough practice to help them catch up more rapidly.
- A small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make as much progress as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that in the early stages of learning to read, reading books are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge
 - providing increasingly targeted support for pupils who are behind with the early stages of reading
 - improving pupils' attainment and progress where leaders are addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning
 - increasing the effectiveness of the whole-school approach for teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - including more precise success criteria in early years action planning.
- Continue to improve attainment and progress so that pupils consistently reach at least the national average in English and mathematics at the end of each key stage by:
 - further embedding the new teaching approaches for reading and mathematics
 - using assessment information for pupils who speak English as an additional language to pinpoint their most crucial next steps for learning
 - teachers having consistently high expectations for pupils' handwriting and establishing appropriate pencil grip as quickly as possible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders are committed to developing pupils as successful learners and rounded individuals. They provide a strong sense of community and a family feel to the school which staff, parents and pupils value highly.
- Leaders have secured rapid improvement in the last academic year, following a disappointing dip in standards in 2017. Support and training from the multi-academy trust have had a significant impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress over the last year.
- Leaders have well-developed approaches to monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff value the regular feedback and personalised support they receive to enable them to continually reflect on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Pupil progress meetings keep a close eye on the progress that pupils are making and ensure that all staff take responsibility for pupils' outcomes. Phase leaders ably provide coaching and support for staff who need to make any improvements to their practice.
- Leaders have taken assertive action to secure and sustain improvements in the quality of teaching. Although they have taken firm action to address teaching that has not met their expectations, the learning and progress for some pupils have still been affected. This group of pupils have some catching up to do, if they are to reach their potential.
- Middle leadership is developing well. Leaders complete detailed reports about the subject they are responsible for in terms of pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The format that has been introduced is now starting to be shared with newer leaders and is providing a sustainable model for school improvement. Subject leaders are learning from the good practice of the most experienced and are having an increasing impact on raising standards across the curriculum.
- Staff morale is very positive. There is an open culture of sharing good practice and learning from each other. Consequently, many staff are keen to take on additional responsibilities. This has provided effective succession planning so that a range of leaders are appropriately skilled and are able to step in, temporarily, if required.
- The multi-academy trust has been instrumental in providing support for leaders to introduce new approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics. Leaders are now focusing on making sure that these approaches become fully embedded so they continue to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders make sure that pupils who are falling behind in the early stages of learning to read receive additional support. However, they acknowledge that pupils' access to books and the amount of practice at home vary. These pupils do not always receive sufficiently personalised support to target their specific needs. Additionally, books are not always well matched to pupils' developing phonics knowledge, which can slow their development.
- An increasing proportion of pupils at the school speak English as an additional language. While most of these pupils make good progress, leaders have identified that

a whole-school approach would ensure that every individual receives the specific support they need to help them achieve well.

- Leaders have high aspirations for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Due to targeted support through effective use of funding, this group of pupils are making good progress across the curriculum. Leaders have benefited from the expertise available through specialist schools within the multi-academy trust.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding very effectively to ensure that pupils receive high-quality sporting opportunities and experiences.
- The curriculum offers a broad range of experiences though themes and topics that give pupils opportunities to question, reason and work practically across a range of subjects. Leaders are committed to providing a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to support pupils' development.
- Leaders' analysis of attendance is effective in identifying specific barriers to individual pupils' attendance. This allows a personalised approach to be adopted when pupils are persistently absent. Leaders' actions successfully reduced the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent to below the national average in 2016/17.
- Leaders and governors continually check the impact of the pupil premium funding to increase its impact on pupils' outcomes. This has led to sharper and more focused spending plans. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are reaching standards that are similar to those of their non-disadvantaged peers and are becoming closer to those reached by other pupils nationally.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust carries out external validation through regular reviews. The reviews have been successful in identifying areas for improvement and producing precise plans for support. The expertise and training that have been available to leaders have resulted in swift improvements since the school joined the trust.
- Members of the governing body have links with specific leaders so they can make checks on the impact of school improvement actions. Consequently, governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They use this knowledge and their wide-ranging skills to hold leaders determinedly to account for pupils' outcomes, providing an effective balance of challenge and support.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They check safeguarding arrangements and ensure that funding, including for disadvantaged pupils, is used well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. The necessary checks are made on all adults who work with pupils at the school. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding pupils and are able to spot possible signs of concern.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and thorough. They show a close and effective

working relationship with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

- The very strong culture of safeguarding that is evident in the school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and are in a good position to learn.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Consequently, a greater proportion of current pupils are making strong progress and are reaching age-related expectations.
- A new approach to teaching mathematics, resulting in improved subject knowledge, is particularly effective. Teachers skilfully plan sequences of learning which build on pupils' prior knowledge. By breaking down learning into smaller steps and using resources to visually represent mathematical concepts, teachers are successful in developing pupils' mathematical understanding.
- A new approach to teaching guided reading is enabling teachers and teaching assistants to specifically focus on developing the reading skills required to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' reading progress.
- Across the curriculum, teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and check how secure their understanding is. Questioning is particularly effective in supporting the most able pupils to make strong progress.
- Teachers make effective use of resources to support pupils' writing. For example, pupils have access to word mats and working walls, which helps them produce accurate work that is of high quality.
- In most cases, staff are quick to identify pupils who need extra support and those who need greater challenge to move their learning on. For example, teachers use pupils' misconceptions well to make teaching points. Sometimes though, teachers do not plan activities which appropriately support the learning of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This leads to a lack of focus on these pupils' most critical areas for development, such as the use of accurate grammar in their writing.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are used well in lessons. Pupils work together to complete tasks, share their ideas and justify their opinions. Pupils are encouraged to use precise and technical vocabulary choices in their spoken and written work. As a result, pupils secure their writing skills and develop a wide vocabulary. They put these writing skills to effective use across the whole curriculum.
- A well-structured approach to the teaching of phonics helps pupils to develop the skills of blending to read, and segmenting to spell. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge well in their writing. The newly introduced 'reading squad' is providing additional support for pupils who are not at the expected stage with their reading development.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils create a constructive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils respond well to the high expectations from staff and usually demonstrate good learning behaviours. Pupils are developing the resilience needed to overcome mistakes when they are learning something new.

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation. However, there are some inconsistencies in Years 3 and 4. Additionally, teachers do not always encourage pupils to use an appropriate pencil grip and this hinders the writing development of some individuals.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have built a strong sense of community within the school. Positive relationships between pupils and staff make sure that pupils feel supported and valued so they can develop as confident and self-assured learners.
- Leaders have built a strong sense of community within the school and this supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As one parent said, 'The strong school ethos has helped build inner confidence in my child as well as a clear sense of fairness, inclusivity, anti-bullying and the importance of being part of a team.'
- Positive relationships between pupils and staff make sure that pupils feel supported and valued so they can develop as confident and self-assured learners. For example, feelings charts are used effectively to help pupils reflect on how they are feeling each day. Staff are then able to pick up any concerns and target support accordingly.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they are confident that adults in school will be there to listen, should they have any concerns.
- School leaders have ensured that, through the wider curriculum, themed weeks and assemblies, pupils gain a secure understanding of how to stay safe. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe.
- The school's breakfast and after-school clubs effectively support pupils' social interaction and physical development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils are polite and well mannered to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils behave positively in lessons and around school, including at break- and lunchtimes. Pupils say there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders and teachers confirm this.
- Pupils have been taught how to use 'affective statements' to help them independently manage any conflict they encounter. Pupils feel that this is an effective strategy and empowers them to let others know how unwanted actions affect their feelings.
- The very few pupils who demonstrate more challenging behaviour are managed effectively by staff. This has led to a reduction in the exclusion rate this year.
- Attendance is showing improvement, but remains just below the national average. The proportion of pupils who were regularly absent fell to below the national average in 2017. Despite leaders' actions, this improvement has not been sustained this year due

to the extenuating circumstances affecting some pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Following a dip in attainment in English and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2017, actions taken by leaders have been effective. From their starting points, most current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are making good progress to enable them to achieve age-appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work, observations of learning and leaders' assessment information show that this is a result of the improvements in the quality of teaching this year.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been instrumental in improving the rate of progress for all pupils in school. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the concepts studied as they move through a unit of work. Pupils' mathematics books show that they develop mathematical fluency very effectively and have opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts through problem-solving and reasoning activities.
- Effective phonics teaching has led to an increasing proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check over time. By 2017, this was in line with the national average. However, pupils' reading books in key stage 1 are not always well matched to their phonics knowledge. When this is the case, pupils are not able to read as successfully, and this hinders the development of confidence and fluency in their reading.
- Pupils have generally made average progress in key stage 2 in English and mathematics over time. However, in 2017, reading progress was below average. Leaders have responded by making sure that pupils have more regular guided reading opportunities using high-quality texts. This has begun to increase pupils' reading progress. Pupils are keen readers and talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read at school. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils often choose reading books from home. This does not always result in pupils accessing appropriately challenging reading material.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attainment has been improving over time. Throughout the school, current disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and usually achieve similar outcomes as their peers. Their attainment is getting closer to that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress. Leaders track their progress very carefully so that learning is targeted precisely to meet pupils' needs.
- Most pupils who speak English as an additional language are making good progress. However, for some individuals, activities do not address pupils' most pressing learning needs. This hinders their development.
- Pupils achieve age-appropriate standards across the wider curriculum, beyond English and mathematics. They usually take great pride and care in the presentation of their work. However, in Years 3 and 4, pupils' handwriting is not always consistently neat and joined.
- In one year group, where the quality of teaching has not been as strong this year,

there are inconsistencies in pupils' attainment and progress. In this class, the lower attaining pupils, in particular, are not making as much progress as they could do.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is led and managed well by a knowledgeable leader who constantly strives to ensure that children make the best possible start to their education. As a result, children make good progress from starting points which are typically lower than for children of their age.
- The early years leader has created a calm and purposeful learning environment. There are numerous opportunities, both inside and outdoors, for children to practise their newly acquired reading, writing and mathematical skills when they are working independently. Staff prepare appropriately challenging tasks for children that are responsive to their individual needs. For example, a group of boys were engaged in reading and recording animal names they had found in the outdoor area. This activity was ably supported by the teacher, who questioned the children to support their learning and understanding further.
- Leaders know that when children join the school, their language and communication skills are often underdeveloped. Therefore, they make sure that adults are trained to model effective language structures so that children's speech and language skills are developed well. This was evident as adults interacted with children as they explored the stimulating tasks that had been set up for them. Skilful questioning about the properties of materials aided children's language and scientific understanding.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective in developing children's understanding of number. The use of effective questioning and demonstrations using a range of visual prompts helped children to understand how numbers could be represented in different ways. Due to teacher's strong subject knowledge, children are fascinated by their learning and show high levels of concentration and independence.
- Staff are adept at following children's interests to support their learning. A group of children who were planning an Irish dance performance for their classmates were engrossed in writing invitations. Adults capitalised on this by challenging them to calculate how many chairs they would need for the audience and to consider what might be an appropriate venue.
- Adults make sure that children are very well looked after. Routines have been firmly established. This supports children in behaving sensibly and using resources independently. Children play cooperatively with each other, sharing equipment and negotiating about taking turns. The early years leader, and the rest of the team, ensure that safeguarding is effective and the legal welfare requirements are met.
- While children make good progress by the end of Reception, the proportion reaching a good level of development over recent years has been just below the national average. Leaders are aware that this was because boys' achievement was well below that of boys nationally. In contrast, girls have achieved in line with girls nationally. Leaders' actions to improve outcomes for boys are resulting in boys making stronger progress this year and their achievement is closer to that of girls. However, leaders recognise that a lack of precise success criteria in their action planning has prevented them from

being more rigorous in checking the progress and achievement of boys.

School details

Unique reference number	140906
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	10047275

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anthony Wilmot
Headteacher	Caroline Skipper
Telephone number	01482 444215
Website	www.stnicholasprimaryschool.org
Email address	admin@st-nicholas.hull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school converted to become an academy in August 2015. In September 2017, the school joined the Humber Education Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, in 2011, it was judged to be good. The local governing body oversees the running of the school on behalf of the board of trustees, which ultimately governs the school.
- An executive headteacher is currently working with the school leading up to the retirement of the current headteacher.
- Most pupils are of White British background. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are above the national average and have increased since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average.
- More pupils than in most schools leave and enter school other than at the usual times.
- In 2016/17, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or executive headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and a range of subject leaders. They met with three members of the local governing body, including the vice-chair. A meeting also took place with the chief executive officer and strategic school improvement leader from the multi-academy trust.
- Discussions took place with a group of teachers about the support and development they receive.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books along with the school's information on pupils' achievement to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils and safeguarding, child protection records, and minutes from academy council meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the school day to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The 11 responses to the staff survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

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