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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Ms Julie Church
Headteacher
Salhouse Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Cheyney Avenue
Salhouse
Norwich
Norfolk
NR13 6RJ

Dear Ms Church

Short inspection of Salhouse Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. It has addressed the areas for improvement arising from the previous inspection.

Since you became the headteacher two years ago, you and your staff have worked well together as a close-knit collaborative team. You have created an ethos of high expectations, which staff and pupils consistently apply to all aspects of school life. Parents appreciate how open and welcoming the school is. They speak highly of the way teachers help their children to do well.

You have successfully improved the learning environment for pupils and staff by, for example, implementing the construction of the superb new building for your nursery. This means that staff and children have access to a welcoming and inspiring indoor and outdoor learning environment all year round.

Working closely with your governing body, you and your team are thoughtful about the quality of education that pupils receive, and insightful about what needs to be done to make the school even better. You consult with, and listen to, the whole school community. As a result, staff and governors know what your key school improvement targets are, and know how well the school is doing as regards achieving them.

Governors are knowledgeable about their school. Consequently, they work

effectively with you and your staff to ensure that pupils are doing well. You provide them with accurate assessment information, which they use to hold you to account for the progress that pupils make. Governors also make sure that the procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are effective.

The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the school. They said that their children are happy at school, and that they are pleased with the progress that they make. For example, one parent commented, 'My children thrive here, and look forward to attending every day.' This view is typical of many similar views expressed by parents.

Pupils behave well in their classrooms and around the school. They play happily together at breaktimes, and know how to seek help from adults if they need to. Pupils say that poor behaviour is rare, and that staff deal with it well if it happens.

Outcomes for pupils at the end of each key stage are mostly as good as, or better than, those of similar pupils nationally. This is not the case with the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in some subjects at the end of key stage 2. However, examples of pupils' work, and the school's own assessment data, show that these pupils nevertheless made good progress from their starting points.

You and your team collect thoughtful and accurate assessment information about pupils' attainment across the whole curriculum. This means that you know how well pupils are doing, identify pupils that are falling behind and help them to catch up. Staff use this assessment data effectively in planning the next stages in pupils' learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, you and your team have not yet used this information as effectively across the broader curriculum to plan the next stages in pupils' learning in other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that the required checks on staff and volunteers take place, and that safeguarding arrangements are fully implemented. Safeguarding leads are well trained and knowledgeable and, in turn, ensure that all staff and volunteers are also sufficiently well informed to know what to do if they have concerns about a child. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive every possible support where necessary.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare, and that staff deal well with it if it occurs. A large majority of parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, also agreed that their children feel safe at school. Pupils are confident about talking to adults in school if they have any concerns or worries.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to assess how the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of reading throughout the school supports pupils to make good

progress by the end of key stage 2 in preparation for the next stage of their education. The teaching of reading is based on children acquiring a secure foundation of phonics skills in the early years. These skills are then applied across the curriculum to support pupils' learning. For example, in an art lesson in the Reception/Year 1 class, pupils read 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' to produce artwork inspired by the text. Similarly, in other year groups teachers provide opportunities to learn across the curriculum using written text, such as informative atlases in the teaching of geography. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using books in the classroom and accessing the well-stocked school library. Teachers use pupils' developing familiarity with written language to plan lessons that analyse the structure of text to help pupils understand its impact on the reader. An analysis of the school's cross-curricular planning for the school year shows that the use of high-quality fiction is embedded not just in English but across the broader curriculum. This school-wide commitment to exposing pupils to written text at every opportunity helps pupils make good progress in reading during their time in the school.

- My second line of enquiry was to find out how well pupils with high prior attainment in the early years and key stage 1 are supported to achieve higher standards across the curriculum by the end of key stage 2. An analysis of pupils' written work in English, and across the broader curriculum, shows that higher-attaining pupils are well supported to use increasingly sophisticated techniques. These include using a broad range of vocabulary, or a wide variety of more effective sentence structures. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that higher-attaining pupils quickly consolidate the arithmetic skills that they need to be effective mathematicians. They are then regularly challenged to apply those skills to more demanding investigative activities. However, leaders recognise that the support pupils receive with these challenges is more effective in some year groups than others. The school's curriculum plans show that higher-attaining pupils have opportunities to acquire deeper knowledge and skills across a range of subjects because of the thoughtful questions that are included in each separate subject. As a result of this evidence, I was able to conclude that pupils with high prior attainment are well supported to make good progress across the whole curriculum by the end of key stage 2.
- My third line of enquiry assessed the extent to which the school offers its pupils a broad and balanced curriculum that helps them to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge. Analysis of pupils' work and curriculum plans, as well as discussions with staff and pupils, shows that the school offers a well-planned and thoughtfully constructed curriculum that engages and enthuses pupils. You and your team have built a curriculum around interesting themes that incorporate intriguing questions and appealing written text. You challenge your pupils to acquire specialist vocabulary, and provide them with opportunities to use it correctly. However, teachers are less able to promote pupils' progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics because teachers are less adept at using information from pupils' work to plan the next stages in their learning. You support pupils to develop their cultural confidence, such as whole-class learning of musical instruments in key stage 2. As a consequence of its careful construction and delivery, your school's curriculum does an effective job in helping pupils to start the next stage of their education with confidence.

- My final line of enquiry looked at your provision for two-year-old children, as this is an age group that was not included in your school at its last inspection. Nursery staff take full advantage of the newly built learning environment to ensure that children in the early years get off to a good start in their education. Staff engage children in thoughtfully planned activities that support them to think and talk about their learning. The quality of the questioning and discussion between staff and children helps them to make good progress and be ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders ensure that children's safeguarding and welfare are well managed, and children thrive as a consequence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of mathematics more consistently challenges all pupils to use rigorous and systematic approaches to problem-solving, and that teachers quickly and accurately correct pupils' misconceptions when they make mistakes
- teachers use information from the assessment of pupils' work across the broader non-core curriculum more effectively to plan the next stages in their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Hopkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I spoke with you and your leadership team, as well as teachers and governors. I met with a group of pupils, and spoke individually to other pupils and staff around the school.

We visited all classrooms together, including your new nursery provision, where we observed pupils' learning, and looked at a wide range of pupils' work from a variety of age groups and subjects.

I scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's assessment data, as well as the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, curriculum plans and governing body minutes. I evaluated safeguarding referrals and child protection records, including school policies where relevant. I examined the school's single central record, and looked at the school's website.

I took into account 47 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 31 free-text comments from parents, and one letter. I also considered 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.