

4 February 2019

Mrs Francesca McLoughlin
Headteacher
Sparkwell All Saints Primary School
Sparkwell
Plymouth
Devon
PL7 5DD

Dear Mrs McLoughlin

Short inspection of Sparkwell All Saints Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Sparkwell All Saints is a friendly, welcoming school that fosters a love of learning. At the heart of this effective school is the way that you and your leadership team work seamlessly together. You share the same goals and are fully committed to making sure that pupils get the best possible education.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils on roll. The school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Effective pastoral support ensures that these pupils settle quickly and feel safe and happy in your school. Parents and carers who submitted comments on the online inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about your school. One parent summarised this with the comment, 'I could not have sent my child to a finer school. Each child is treated as an individual and their happiness is paramount.'

Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. The school environment is calm and purposeful. During lessons, pupils across the school are focused, respectful and attentive. The innovative curriculum motivates and engages pupils. Classrooms and corridors display interesting examples of pupils' work that demonstrate the breadth of topics covered. The quality of pupils' art and design work is particularly high. Pupils and parents value the enhanced curriculum opportunities they receive, such as weekly forest school sessions. All pupils I talked to on inspection said that they enjoyed school and felt inspired by their learning.

Leaders throughout the school, including trustees, have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and the areas to work on. Trustees provide strong support and effective challenge. This includes their checks on the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This challenge has helped you to make significant improvements in a number of key areas since the last inspection. For example, well-considered changes to the school's assessment and feedback policy have led to an improvement in the quality of pupils' work.

In addition, focused work to ensure that pupils use their knowledge of phonics in their writing is highly successful. Teachers, in the early years and key stage 1, check pupils' developing skills carefully in order to apply this to their writing. A greatly increased proportion of pupils use phonics well to tackle and read new words. Teachers sustain an effective focus on improving writing using a range of techniques well to stimulate pupils' interest. This means that most children start Year 3 with reading and writing skills matching those that are usually found. However, further work is required so that low- and middle-ability pupils in key stage 2 use spelling and punctuation rules consistently in their writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of great importance to all staff and trustees. You and your staff know your pupils and their families very well and are quick to spot any problems, including unusual patterns of attendance or punctuality. You investigate any concerns swiftly and involve specialist agencies when required. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils who spoke with me said that they feel safe in school. This is because they are happy to talk to different members of staff if they have any worries. Pupils also feel safe because they are taught to manage risk in different situations. For example, pupils have been taught about the dangers of water and how to stay safe when learning outdoors.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remains good, my first key line of enquiry focused on the actions you have taken to ensure that all pupils make strong progress in key stage 1. This is because the year groups have often been too small to compare or identify trends.
- Children in early years get off to a strong start with their education. Consistently strong teaching results in most pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is broadly in line with national averages. This is because pupils receive high-quality phonics sessions that enable them to develop their skills in decoding words. Teaching assistants are well trained and undertake

rapid and personalised intervention to help pupils catch up. Pupils have regular opportunities to read to an adult using reading books that are matched to their particular stage of reading development.

- Work in books shows that there is a wide range of purposeful writing across the curriculum, including fiction and non-fiction. Teachers' expectations of writing in Year 2 are high, ensuring that pupils meet the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils are able to count confidently, recognise fractions and use mathematical vocabulary correctly. Pupils' understanding of problem solving is secure, especially when investigating addition and subtraction facts. However, leaders are rightly focusing on specific interventions to increase the number of pupils who reach the higher standard in mathematics.
- We agreed that my second line of enquiry would be to check the impact of teachers' actions to ensure that the key stage 2 curriculum is effective in providing sufficient opportunities for pupils, of all abilities, to achieve their full potential.
- A particular strength of the curriculum is the way pupils are inspired to think deeply about their learning. Typically, pupils are inquisitive about the topics being taught and they respond positively to teachers' questions and guidance. Pupils develop resilience because of the way they are encouraged to approach problems. An example of this was the mature dialogue shared by pupils, including the most able, in Year 3 and Year 4 during an environmental debate. Teachers provide a culture of no mistakes, just learning opportunities. Teachers make their expectations clear. As a result, pupils thrive on responsibility and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The strong culture of reading is a central part of the life of the school. You place particular focus on helping those who need to catch up. For example, those pupils currently in Year 3 who didn't reach the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 1 are making rapid progress. These pupils now read with greater confidence and stamina, and with improved fluency.
- Pupils make good use of the rich vocabulary gained from the curriculum, especially history and geography, to make their writing come alive. Pupils' imagination and composition show marked improvement over time. However, leaders accurately identify that some low- and middle-ability pupils do not use spelling and punctuation rules as effectively as they could.
- Your mathematics leader has worked tirelessly to bring about significant improvements in the way that pupils are able to verbally explain their thinking in mathematics. The approach is also helping teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' previous learning. These actions are leading to a more consistent approach by teachers across the school. However, leaders know that the next step is to develop pupils' ability to record their mathematical thinking and reasoning.
- My third line of enquiry explored the effectiveness of the school's support for pupils with SEND.
- This is an inclusive school where children of all abilities are welcomed and

supported in a climate of trust and care. Leaders have strengthened the school's ability to meet the needs of an increasing number of pupils who have social and emotional needs.

- Some pupils with SEND still have a distance to travel before they meet their individual expectations in writing and mathematics. This is because some learning activities are too difficult. Leaders know that they need to improve the way teachers check on pupils' understanding and take swift action to adapt activities when learning falters.
- My fourth and final line of enquiry was to assess the effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving pupils' attendance. This is because attendance has remained below average over time.
- You have implemented a culture of high expectations around attendance. Your actions are beginning to have a positive impact on challenging absence. Where teachers perceive there to be concerns, they act swiftly. They are vigilant in working closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. You use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils to attend breakfast club. Consequently, current attendance and punctuality rates are now improved, and rates of persistent absence are below the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff receive the training they need to assess accurately the learning of pupils with SEND and plan appropriate writing and mathematics activities
- low- and middle-ability pupils in key stage 2 use age-appropriate spelling and punctuation rules in their writing across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Costello
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, middle leaders, trustees, parents and pupils. Together we observed pupils' learning across the school. We looked at work in books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and their progress over time. I also listened to pupils read in phonic intervention groups. I scrutinised school

documents, including the school's action plan and self-evaluation document. I also looked at records relating to behaviour and safety, attendance and safeguarding. I had a discussion with a group of pupils to gather their views of the school and their learning. I also considered 64 responses to the online survey, Parent View.