

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 January 2019

Mrs Wendy Rose
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School
Dannah Street
Ripley
Derbyshire
DE5 3BD

Dear Mrs Rose

Short inspection of St John's CofE 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 November 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Following a dip in standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, attainment improved significantly in 2018. This was because leaders' incisive action – based on a detailed analysis of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching – led to rapid improvement. The work in pupils' books and the school's latest assessment information show that pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is strong capacity for sustained improvement in the leadership team at all levels.

Leaders and staff have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Subject leadership has improved as a result of effective training. Subject leaders are confident in their roles and have an accurate up-to-date overview of standards in their subject areas. The work in pupils' books in key stage 2 shows that the steps you have taken to improve pupils' writing – and the overall quality of their work – have proved beneficial.

The leadership team knows the school – and its strengths and weaknesses – very well. You have worked hard to share your vision, exemplified in the comment, 'Everything we do is about raising aspirations.' The impact of this was clear to see during the inspection, as pupils throughout the school listened carefully to their teachers and concentrated on their work.

You have developed a clear rationale for your curriculum design, with an emphasis on the arts and on science, technology and mathematics. Your aim is to support and challenge all pupils – especially those who are disadvantaged – to acquire a rich and varied balance of knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. You also believe that your approach to the curriculum has an increasingly positive impact on pupils' confidence, self-esteem and well-being. In discussion, pupils told me that they appreciate the wide range of experiences available to them, both within lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Your work to develop the curriculum has been recognised beyond the school. You have received awards and have been invited to share your experiences at conferences.

Pupils, staff, parents and carers speak highly of the school. Pupils told me, 'Teachers make the learning fun and interesting.' In their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, parents expressed views such as, 'St John's is a lovely, welcoming school with friendly, helpful staff' and, 'The school provides a brilliant range of additional clubs for the children to try out new activities'. Staff say that they feel proud to work at the school.

Your plans for improvement accurately focus on actions to bring sustained, continuous improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils, parents and staff say that the school is safe. In discussion, pupils said, 'Our teachers and friends support us.' They confirmed that bullying is rare and that there are trusted staff to help if they have any worries or concerns.

You and the safeguarding team have strong systems in place for reporting and responding to any welfare concerns that may arise. Your records are clear and thorough, showing clear actions that are followed through with perseverance to ensure that pupils are safe. There is strong partnership work with a range of agencies, including health and social care.

Checks on staff suitability to work with children are in line with statutory requirements. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I focused my attention on the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 2. To that end, I visited classes with you and the deputy headteacher. We observed teaching and learning and looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects. This confirmed that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and make good use of time in lessons. Adults support pupils effectively and allow them time to review and revise their work, in line with the school's marking and feedback policy. Occasionally, in lower key stage 2, teachers did not set work that challenged the most able pupils in their thinking.
- The evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that pupils in the current Year 6

typically present their work with pride. They successfully apply skills learned in English lessons to enable them to produce work of an equally high standard across a range of subjects. However, the standards of presentation – and the overall quality of work – were found to be lower in the sample of books from Year 2 than in Year 6.

- I considered the impact of the school's actions to improve attendance. As a result of the wide range of measures employed by school leaders and staff, overall attendance is improving and is in line with the national average. You regularly and thoroughly monitor attendance and continue to work with the small number of pupils who are persistently absent and their families. This includes liaising with outside agencies when necessary.
- Governance is strong. In discussion, governors spoke knowledgeably and accurately about the school. They have a clear and detailed overview of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide effective support and challenge for leaders, holding them to account for the school's performance. Strong governance enhances the leadership team's capacity to sustain improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils make sustained good progress and the most able pupils attain highly
- teachers' expectations for the standards of presentation are equally high across all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held a series of meetings with you and the leadership team. I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I met with a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of subject leaders, members of the school's safeguarding team and the school business officer. I held a discussion with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 and spoke with pupils informally around school and during lessons. I conducted a tour of the school with

you and other leaders to observe pupils' learning in key stage 2. I examined pupils' work in their books. I considered the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. I examined a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's analysis of pupils' current achievement, leaders' monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation summary and its plans for improvement.