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10 March 2020

Miss Samantha Price
St John's Primary Academy
Hobnock Road
Essington
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
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Dear Miss Price,

No formal designation inspection of St John's Primary Academy

Following my visit with Khalid Din, Ofsted Inspector, and Christopher Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 26–27 February 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school as concerns had been raised with Ofsted. Also, there were concerns about aspects of the quality of education provided by the school.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We observed the school's work and met with the headteacher and other leaders and staff. These included the school's family liaison officer and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENDCo). I met with governors, and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust that the school is part of.

Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

Inspectors observed behaviour during social and lesson times. Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with pupils. The following subjects were looked at in depth: reading, writing, mathematics and geography. Inspectors made short visits to a range of lessons across all key stages. During these visits, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils to assess the quality of their learning.

We also scrutinised a range of policies and documentation relating to attendance and exclusions. I looked at governors' minutes and the school's website.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

St John's Primary Academy is a Church of England (voluntary controlled) school. The school is part of the Future Generation Trust. The current headteacher took up their post in September 2019. The previous headteacher is now the CEO of the trust. There are two temporary assistant headteachers in post. There are plans to recruit a permanent deputy headteacher.

Findings

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Staff act quickly when necessary, keep careful records and let the right people know. Leaders carry out all the proper checks on adults who work at the school. Leaders keep the school site secure and in good condition. Leaders make sure that they store medicines in the right place. An appropriate number of staff are first aid trained.

Staff teach pupils how to look after themselves in different situations so that they learn how to manage everyday risks in sensible ways. Pupils say they that feel safe and know how to keep safe. They learn about anti-bullying and fire safety and understand how to use the internet responsibly. Pupils' behaviour in and around school is generally very good.

The new headteacher has quickly established her vision for the school. A strong team of staff and senior leaders support the headteacher well. Senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Newly qualified teachers say that they receive the support and guidance they need. They say that their workload is manageable.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Alongside this, they have ensured that all pupils can access a wide range of subjects.

Children can start part-time or full-time in the school's Nursery, which includes provision for two-year-olds. Children then attend full time in the Reception classes. Policies, procedures and supervision are in place to ensure that the youngest children are safe and well cared for. Learning environments in the early years are bright and attractive. Carefully planned activities that take place inside and outside of the classroom support children's learning well. The school is fortunate to have

extensive grounds. Leaders make good use of this space, for example utilising the woodland area for 'Forest School' sessions.

In the early years, staff make careful observations of children's progress, which they record in 'Learning Journey' books. These show children taking part in a wide range of activities that stimulate their curiosity. A range of visits and visitors make the curriculum real and relevant for children. For example, a beekeeper came in to talk to children about the importance of bees in the environment.

Reading is taught successfully throughout the school right from when children start at the school through to when they leave. All staff are passionate about reading and instil a love of reading in pupils. Phonics is taught daily in Reception and key stage 1. Reading diaries show pupils regularly read at home and at school. Year 1 pupils make visits to a local residential home and read books in partnership with the elderly residents there. The oldest pupils study books that stimulate discussion. For example, in a Year 6 guided reading session pupils were studying 'There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom' by Louis Sachar.

In English, mathematics, geography and many other subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Pupils learn the right things in the right order and reach high standards. Even so, leaders are always looking for ways to help them do better.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take part in all aspects of school life. The SENDCo is knowledgeable and experienced. There are clear systems in place for identifying pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that all staff, including learning support assistants, have the knowledge and skills to support pupils effectively. As a result, these pupils achieve well.

Leaders give a high priority to the needs of disadvantaged pupils. They keep a careful check on how these pupils are doing. A large proportion of disadvantaged pupils attend the wide range of clubs and extra activities that are offered by the school.

Systems for monitoring attendance and exclusions follow statutory requirements. An effective team of staff ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the advice and support they need.

Pupils at the school are polite, articulate and confident when talking about their school. Year 6 pupils talked about the range of trips and visits they can take part in including a cultural trip to Paris and attending 'Wilderness Academy' where they learned to set up camp in the wild and safely light a fire. They talk proudly about their musical and sporting achievements and success in these at a local level.

The school is well supported by the Future Generation Trust. Governors and trustees are passionate in their pursuit of excellence. They do all they can to ensure that

equal opportunities are well promoted throughout the school. As a result of the actions of leaders, pupils achieve highly and are well prepared for secondary school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector