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7 November 2017

Ms Marilyn Borlase
Headteacher
St John's Primary School
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Dear Ms Borlase

Short inspection of St John's Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors and leaders have an insightful knowledge of the school. Plans to develop the school further are accurate and shared with staff effectively. You lead the school by example, setting a clear vision and ensuring that the well-being of pupils is at the core of your actions.

Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has remained consistent. You have developed leadership further by giving more responsibility to phase leaders. They lead the monitoring and evaluation of standards in teaching, learning and assessment. They have greater responsibility to check pupils' progress and identify pupils that require extra support. You have ensured that they receive support through regular visits of the link officer from the local authority. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is consistent.

Governors and leaders prioritised the development of reading over the last year. This was in response to the end of key stage 2 results, in 2016, being below the school's expectations. Leaders implemented a range of strategies, which have been successful in raising standards in reading. Governors have a robust understanding of the school and set high expectations. They check the effectiveness of leaders' strategies to improve pupils' progress. At the end of key stage 2, in 2017, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national averages. However, leaders recognise that, in improving this, they have not been as effective in improving pupils' achievement in writing at the end of key stage 1.

The extensive building work of a new school on the current site has resulted in significant challenges. Leaders have maintained an orderly and welcoming environment despite the limits of space. Pupils are well looked after and staff and most parents agree.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements at the school are excellent. Governors and leaders place a high priority on pupils' safety. Training for staff is rigorous and they have a strong understanding of procedures. Leaders ensure that staff's knowledge of the latest safeguarding guidance is well developed. For example, staff have a strong understanding of female genital mutilation and extremism. Referrals to external agencies are made in a timely manner. Individual records of actions taken to support vulnerable pupils and families are detailed. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns with parents and external agencies. Members of staff told me that if safeguarding concerns are raised, then leaders immediately follow these up.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of potential risks to pupils. Pupils receive well-thought-out opportunities to develop their understanding of safety. For example, pupils receive opportunities to develop their understanding of the dangers of grooming and child sexual exploitation in an age-appropriate way. Lessons in personal, social and health education provide pupils with opportunities to share their views. Parents are involved through workshops, to develop their understanding of keeping pupils safe online. Leaders work effectively with external specialists to offer additional support to pupils with complex needs. As a result, staff, parents and pupils agree that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and I agreed to look at two key areas. The first of these was around the effectiveness of leaders' actions to raise pupils' achievement in writing, particularly at the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards at the end of key stage 1, in 2017, were well below the national averages.
- Leaders' procedures to check pupils' progress are robust. They ensure that transition arrangements between previous teachers and new teachers are secure. Phase leaders oversee the progress of pupils. Regular pupil progress meetings allow for teachers and leaders to gain a strong understanding of pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have accurate information about pupils' writing abilities. Teachers work both within the school and with local schools to gain a better understanding of expectations within writing. However, in 2017, leaders did not ensure that writing guidance to check pupils' writing abilities was effectively used. As a result, several pupils did not achieve as highly as they could have. Leaders have ensured that targets in pupils' books now match age-related expectations well.
- The teaching of writing is consistent. Teachers engage pupils well with interesting texts. Pupils are encouraged to develop their writing with regular

opportunities to write at length. Their work is neat and presented to a high standard. Books scrutinised across the school suggest that pupils make strong progress from their starting points. However, pupils' opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as topic lessons, are limited.

- Pupils who enter the school later in the year make good progress. Those pupils with early language skills receive a range of interventions. For example, small group support to develop pupils' language skills makes a clear difference. Teaching assistants use good questioning to support pupils' development of new vocabulary. The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is a strength.
- However, pupils at the early stages of writing receive limited opportunities to develop their skills. Tasks set for these pupils do not provide them with enough challenge. As a result, their progress is not as good as it could be.
- Teachers provide many reminders to pupils about improving their work. Pupils respond well to teachers' guidance. In key stage 2, pupils take greater ownership of checking each other's work. They use a variety of harder vocabulary. However, pupils continue to make common errors in their writing. Teachers do not typically rectify pupils' incorrect sentence structures when giving guidance. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- The second line of enquiry was around levels of attendance, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the past, these pupils had absence rates that were higher than their peers.
- Leaders check pupils' attendance effectively. Several strategies encourage pupils to attend regularly. For example, class competitions, attendance awards and the recently implemented '96+ club' raise the profile of attendance. Leaders have been proactive in challenging poor attendance in the additional resource provision.
- As a result, absence and persistent absence rates for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have improved. However, rates of attendance remain below the national averages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the achievement of pupils in writing, particularly at the end of key stage 1, rises to be at least in line with the national average by:
 - improving the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum
 - providing guidance to pupils to improve common mistakes in their writing
 - providing pupils, particularly those at the early stages of writing, with more challenging tasks matched to their needs
- absence rates, particularly rates of persistent absenteeism, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to decline so that they are at least in line with the national averages.

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

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with you, the deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and members of the governing body to evaluate the school's priorities.
- I scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding, pupil progress, attendance and the school's self-evaluation.
- I visited classrooms and scrutinised books alongside you and the deputy headteacher.
- I had a phone conversation with the local authority link officer.
- I analysed Ofsted's online surveys, including 19 responses from parents and 10 from staff.