

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 May 2018

Sue Brown
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE Infant School and Surestart Children's Centre, Tongham
East Ring
The Cardinals
Tongham
Farnham
Surrey
GU10 1EF

Dear Mrs Brown

Short inspection of St Paul's CofE Infant School and Surestart Children's Centre, Tongham

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team are very ambitious for St Paul's so that every pupil is well supported in your successful school in the heart of the village. Staff morale is high and parents are overwhelming supportive of the school. One parent wrote, 'I am extremely grateful to St Paul's and continue to be so. My expectations are regularly exceeded in terms of the quality of the holistic environment provided by all the staff.' Another parent observed that, 'From day one of starting at St Paul's Infant School, my son has absolutely loved going.'

You are diligent about reviewing current practice and promptly take any necessary action to improve teaching. Leaders can confidently articulate your aims for the school. You rightly acknowledge that the school development plan should be refined further so that the effectiveness of your actions for groups of pupils can be measured. Leaders are very enthusiastic and work hard so that pupils have the best possible opportunities to make strong progress. Teaching assistants have undertaken a useful range of valuable and relevant training to develop their understanding of how pupils learn, so they can better support pupils in class. In addition, you have worked with schools to source additional training for teachers. You ensure that across the school the atmosphere is welcoming and inspiring. A wide and good range of pupils' work is displayed around the school to celebrate their achievements in a variety of subjects.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development, including supporting pupils with additional needs. They challenge and support the senior leadership team effectively. They visit the school regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of its work, including reflecting on teaching and learning.

St Paul's is a very happy school where pupils enjoy coming to school. The calm, highly supportive and well-organised environment ensures that everyone is valued within this nurturing and caring community. The school is well maintained with interesting and stimulating displays in the classrooms. The pupils are highly supportive of the staff because they help them to learn well in class. One pupil said: 'Teachers explain things really clearly.' During my classroom visits, it was very evident that pupils are enthusiastic about learning, encouraged and keen to do well. Pupils play well together and thoroughly enjoy using the outdoor adventure equipment in a safe manner, where they are well supervised by staff.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pupils now spend more time practising their writing through a wide range of subjects. The outdoor area in the early years foundation stage has been developed imaginatively, as described below.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is rightly your priority; you have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils' safety is always discussed at governors' meetings. You provide ongoing training to staff and governors so that everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are in place. The school has successful systems in place to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the well-considered support they need. The strong links with the on-site Children's Centre mean that parents can easily access a wide range of services to support their children.

You promote safety in all that you do. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They can explain some of the dangers when using the internet. Around the school, staff are on hand to take care of pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe and parents strongly agree that their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on: how leaders ensure that pupils make good progress in mathematics; how effectively leaders are checking that phonics is taught well; and how effectively leaders make sure that pupils through the early years make good progress.
- The mathematics leader has implemented some well-chosen changes to the way the subject is taught, which have led to improved standards. Pupils now carry out problem-solving activities more often, using their reasoning and applying skills. I saw very enthusiastic pupils carefully discussing how to use their addition skills to answer word-based questions. Teachers make sure that pupils have regular

mathematical challenges, including letting them choose the level of work they feel they can tackle best. As a result, pupils' books show that they are making good progress. Disadvantaged pupils are also making good progress as they are well supported. Teaching assistants ask effective, open-ended questions to allow pupils to explain their reasoning. You rightly acknowledge that some of the most able pupils need further challenge in mathematics to enable them to develop a greater depth of understanding and reach the highest standards.

- The proportion of pupils meeting expectations in the Year 1 phonics screening checks has not matched the national average in recent years. However, by Year 2, the proportion of pupils meeting expectations matches the national average. You and the team have evaluated the teaching of phonics effectively and wisely made some well-chosen adjustments. Some staff have visited other schools to share best practice in the teaching of phonics.
- Staff are very knowledgeable about the school's approach to teaching phonics, which is delivered consistently throughout the classes. Teachers assess children's levels on arrival and provide the correct support for them in their phonics lessons. Regular assessments take place to check pupils' knowledge and assess whether any of them need additional or different support. However, you rightly recognise that some less able pupils need to be supported further to make stronger progress. I heard some pupils read and they used their phonics skills confidently to sound out difficult words. Teachers accurately check pupils' understanding of different sounds that words can make as well as complex patterns. Pupils are making improved, strong progress in learning the sounds that letters make. Consequently, in comparison with last year, a higher proportion of pupils currently in Year 1 are on track to reach the expected phonics check standard this year.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils leaving the early years foundation stage at age-related expectations and being well prepared for Year 1 has varied. Partly due to the inclusive nature of the school, some children enter St Paul's with levels below those expected for their age. During my visits to the reception class, I observed how much children enjoy learning and the engaging activities that adults plan for them. One group of children was playing skittles outdoors and the teaching assistant skilfully asked them subtraction questions to find out how many skittles were still standing after each child rolled the ball.
- The children's learning journals show the strong progress that children are clearly making across different areas of the curriculum. Children's progress is tracked effectively and leaders can accurately identify what they need to learn next. A range of well-planned activities contribute to promoting children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Activities include children tackling writing which develops their independent skills linked to real-life situations. For example, children wrote customer's requests on an order form and used descriptive words to say how different materials felt when they were touched. The early years leader is rightly developing a variety of ways to help more boys to develop their independent writing skills.
- Adult relationships with children are caring and supportive. Children's behaviour is good and they support and care for each other. Those children who enter with

starting points below what is typical for their age make good progress. Each week a class book and words are chosen carefully to develop further children's reading comprehension and spellings.

- You have developed the outside area for early years most effectively. It includes an enlarged playground space so children can ride their bikes and play with the large equipment. The outdoor space is used very well to promote strong learning. For example, the writing, outdoor washing line means that children can share their good work, which helps them to make convincing progress towards meeting the early learning goals. Adult relationships with children are caring and supportive. Children's behaviour is good and they support and care for each other. Because of the strong teaching and provision, a higher proportion of pupils in comparison with last year is on track to meet the end-of-year expectations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's development plan is refined further to include actions which can easily be measured so that leaders can check whether they are supporting groups of learners well
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged so that more of them attain higher standards in mathematics
- high expectations are sustained in phonics, so that pupils' progress, especially for the less able, continues to increase so that more children reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Darren Aisthorpe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the assistant headteacher, the subject leader for English and three governors. I also had meetings with the school business manager and a group of pupils. I spoke with seven parents on the playground and considered 27 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including comments parents had written. I also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Together with you, I observed teaching and learning across the school and I heard some pupils read. I looked at pupils' learning in their mathematics and English books, as well as evidence of learning in Reception children's work. I observed

pupils at breaktime and spoke with them informally. I also considered a range of documents related to safeguarding, curriculum, the school action plan, governance, teaching, learning and assessment.