

Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas CofE Primary School

Manor Farm Avenue, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 9AD

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2022

Outcome

St Nicholas CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' high expectations permeate throughout the school. Classrooms at St Nicholas hum with happy learners. Pupils work hard. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils say that any poor behaviour is dealt with thoroughly. They are proud of their school and their learning. Classrooms are tidy and displays showcase the high-quality work that pupils achieve. There is a high level of attention to detail in all aspects of the school's work.

The core values of friendship, compassion and trust are intrinsic to the life of the school. For example, pupils show compassion for others when discussing bullying, reflecting on the many reasons why a person may bully. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Leaders have zero tolerance for bullying, and pupils know it. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils are happy. They enjoy many aspects of their school such as cooking lessons, playing basketball in the ball cage and the many friendships they make.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were many clubs, residential visits and performances. Pupils talk excitedly about these starting up again. During the inspection, pupils were rehearsing for the much-anticipated production, 'High School Musical'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils at St Nicholas love reading. They talk confidently about their favourite books, poems and authors. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme to help pupils learn to read. Children in Reception learn how to blend sounds together. They can read words such as 'sheep' and 'feet' with ease. Teachers make sure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Recently, all members of staff have received training on how to teach the programme. However, because the programme is so new, some staff do not yet know the correct way to say some of the sounds and need more training.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In most subjects, pupils understand how what they have

learned before helps them to understand new learning. This is because the curriculum in these subjects is well sequenced, taught well and assessed carefully. There is a sharp focus on improving pupils' vocabulary. In Reception, for example, children used the book Jasper's Beanstalk to order the days of the week. They can use the words 'before', 'after' and 'next' confidently.

In subjects that leaders have sequenced well, teachers check the key knowledge that pupils have understood before moving them on to new ideas. They make sure that pupils remember what they have learned. For example, in mathematics, pupils use 'journaling' which are notes on key knowledge they need to learn to help them remember. Any pupil who is struggling to keep up is quickly spotted. They then receive further support, such as additional teaching before a lesson or daily reading. Leaders make sure that 'no child is left behind'.

COVID-19 has caused high levels of staff absence and so leaders' curriculum thinking is not yet finished. In a small number of subjects, for example computing and geography, leaders are still developing the exact knowledge pupils need to learn and remember from the early years to Year 6. For instance, leaders have not yet considered precisely enough what pupils will learn and be able to do in geography fieldwork.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and school life, and they learn well. Leaders observe, assess and consult with these pupils to identify any needs at the earliest opportunity. Leaders track progress carefully. They make sure that teachers have the knowledge and the resources to teach pupils with SEND well.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of a healthy body and a healthy mind. Pupils know about the importance of diet, rest and positive relationships. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about disabilities and differences, such as autism spectrum disorder and race. Pupils say this helps them understand their friends better.

Leaders are considerate of staff's workload. Subject leaders appreciate the time they are given to check pupils' learning. They have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in their subject and what could be even better.

Following the recent recruitment of a permanent headteacher, governors are reviewing their strategic vision for the school. They are ambitious that all St Nicholas' pupils succeed. They support and challenge leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have recently increased the size of their safeguarding team. This has further strengthened the robust systems and capacity to seek the right help for vulnerable pupils and their families, including pursuing external agencies.

Regular training, both face to face and online, ensures that staff know the signs to look out for should a pupil be at risk of harm. They report any concerns, no matter how small.

Leaders had not ensured that one of the statutory pre-employment checks on staff was carried out. This oversight was rectified during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some staff pronounce phonemes inaccurately while teaching the newly introduced phonics programme. This means pupils sometimes copy these incorrect sounds, and staff do not correct pupils when they make errors as their own subject knowledge is not yet secure enough. Leaders should continue to provide training and support so that all staff are confident and skilled in the delivery of the phonics programme.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently sequenced in a few foundation subjects. This means that staff do not always know what pupils have learned and the precise knowledge they need to teach to build on that. Leaders should ensure that key knowledge and skills are identified explicitly in all subjects from early years to Year 6. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

Background2

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	125230
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10211383
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Stephen Ellison
Headteacher	Nik Cook
Website	www.stnicholas-shepperton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in senior leadership since the last inspection. The previous headteacher retired in April 2021 and the deputy headteacher became acting headteacher. She was promoted to the substantive headteacher position the week before this inspection.
- There has been an acting deputy headteacher in the role since April 2021.
- St Nicholas is a Church of England school under the Diocese of London.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She heard pupils read to adults from the school.

- The inspector also examined pupils' work and spoke to leaders and pupils about some other subjects, including music, geography and design and technology.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. This included safer recruitment checks and record-keeping of concerns, as well as speaking to pupils and staff.
- The inspector gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour on learning, the school's wider curriculum offer and how well leaders support staff with their workload. She also scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for school improvement.
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of London. She met with six representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with the special educational needs coordinator and representatives from the early years department.
- Responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments were considered by the inspector. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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