

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr John Redman  
Headteacher  
St David's Primary School

Dear Mr Redman

### **Short inspection of St David's Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 2016, 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 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2015, you have communicated an unwavering determination to provide the very best education for every pupil. Leaders, staff and members of the school governance committee (SGC) share your ambition. A culture of professional challenge and reflection exists, where everyone feels supported to achieve their best. Despite the changes in staffing and pupil numbers that your context brings, your continual checks on what is working well and where further improvement is needed are effective. The quality of teaching remains good and pupils consistently reach or exceed the standards expected for their age.

You and your assistant headteacher are open and honest about the school's strengths and areas for development. Together, you have worked quickly to build a close-knit team where everyone feels valued and respected. Indeed, listening to the voice and opinion of others, whether this be staff, parents or pupils, is the hallmark of your school improvement model. Through this effective partnership working, you have ensured that everyone 'buys into' your vision and takes shared ownership of the changes you are making.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with improving the quality of pupils' writing; following through rigorously on the outcomes of pupils' assessments; and ensuring that pupils understood what they were learning. You and your team have addressed these areas for improvement successfully. Pupils now write more frequently and at greater length, applying their understanding of

grammar, punctuation and spelling in a range of meaningful contexts, such as when writing articles for the school newspaper. Your new assessment framework highlights where pupils have achieved well and where they still need to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding more clearly. You draw well on the support of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) advisers to verify the accuracy of these assessments. In this way, you are assured of an accurate baseline of standards across pupils' reading, writing and mathematics.

These whole-school approaches, together with more exciting and meaningful curriculum experiences, have led to greater consistency in the quality of teaching. Teachers are adept at using pupils' assessment information to plan teaching activities that meet most pupils' needs and abilities. Training for staff is developing their confidence in trying out new ideas during lessons. Staff also benefit from visits to good and outstanding schools both in England and abroad. Pupils report that they are enjoying their lessons more and appreciate, as one pupil articulated, 'being able to see how their learning can be used in the real world'.

You and your senior team keep a careful eye on how well these new initiatives are working in everyday practice. While the vast majority of pupils have reached at least what is expected for their age in English and mathematics over time, you are aware that the most able pupils could be stretched further to reach their full potential. Importantly, monitoring activities need to highlight this group of pupils more closely so that everyone, including the SGC, can offer more appropriate challenge and support.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, take account of recent legislation and model good practice. Regular audits of key systems and processes and their effectiveness in keeping pupils safe are used to continually adjust school policies and procedures. For example, one of your first actions as headteacher was to remodel the school site so that it is a safer environment for pupils. You also ensure that staff attend update training regularly so that they are vigilant and mindful of the potential dangers to pupils, including those that can arise due to exposure to extremist views. Close links and proactive work with other agencies, such as Interpol and social-work services, ensure that referrals for more specialist support are managed well, when needed.

Pupils have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. You cultivate a strong sense of belonging among pupils, teaching them about the values of respect, tolerance and open acceptance in a multi-faith and multicultural society. You and your team have created a culture where difference, in whatever form it may take, does not detract from pupils' learning.

## Inspection findings

- Improving the quality of teaching lies at the heart of your work. Your actions since joining the school focus on ensuring that every pupil achieves their best and is well prepared for the future. You balance the focus on academic standards and wider experiences offered to pupils carefully. Opportunities for music, art and philosophy afford pupils regular opportunities to work creatively, cooperate with their classmates and develop reasoned points of view about the world around them. Despite pupils' high mobility, they are increasingly resilient to change and develop the character traits needed to settle quickly, make new friends and learn effectively.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), is particularly strong. Over the last three years, all pupils have met the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, with an increasingly high proportion passing this check with full marks. This is due to consistent and focused teaching that meets pupils' needs. You have noticed, through your regular monitoring of teaching, that pupils' comprehension skills are less well developed. Plans are already in place to ensure that teachers do not shy away from promoting adventurous vocabulary, and the recently refurbished library now offers a wider range of high-quality texts for pupils to enjoy.
- Pupils' writing skills are developing well. Work in pupils' books shows that they use correct grammar and punctuation for different audiences and purposes effectively. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the impact of word, sentence and grammatical choices on the reader. Opportunities for pupils to orally rehearse their thoughts, such as when filming segments for 'St David's TV Station', develop their authorial style and voice well alongside their ability to express their views and opinions confidently.
- Teachers have high expectations for what most of their pupils can achieve. Staff are particularly successful at identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and designing activities to enable them to catch up quickly. Staff show less understanding about meeting the needs of the most able pupils, so that this group of pupils sometimes go unchallenged.
- Recent changes to the SGC have brought a fresh perspective and renewed skill set, including from a teaching background, to the leadership of the school. All members who met with me are committed to their roles and eager to make a greater difference for the pupils at St David's. While they possess the right level of analytical skill and experience, they do not have as strategic an oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses as they might because leaders' targets for what pupils should achieve during their time at school are not readily shared with them. While you and your assistant headteacher are clear about what you expect and by when, you are aware that a different

mechanism needs to be developed to share your thinking more overtly with the members of the SGC.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and members of the SGC should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are challenged in their learning, so that they reach their full potential and more exceed what is expected for their age
- teachers identify pupils' misconceptions during lessons as they arise and adjust their teaching to maximise what pupils achieve
- leaders' ambitions, targets and timescales for what pupils can achieve during their time at the school are clearly communicated to members of the school governance committee, so that they know whether agreed actions are having the desired impact.

I am copying this letter to the senior principal, MoD Schools and the chair of the school governance committee. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I discussed the work of the school with you, the assistant headteacher, four members of staff, the vice-chair and two other members of the SGC and a group of pupils. I also spoke on the telephone to a representative from the MoD Schools team and considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. You accompanied me on my visits to each classroom and together, we evaluated the current standard of writing in pupils' books. I scrutinised a range of other documentation, including your self-evaluation, improvement planning and recent information about pupils' attainment and progress. I also examined documents relating to attendance and the safeguarding of pupils. No staff or pupil questionnaire responses were received during the inspection.