

Inspection of St Nicholas' Primary and Nursery School

Raymund Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 0PJ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Nicholas' Primary and Nursery School is a highly nurturing, inclusive and close-knit community where staff and pupils feel valued and appreciated. The school's vision of 'live, love, learn and be happy' is central to everyday routines. Pupils have a profound sense of responsibility towards others. They are excellent role models.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils work hard and learn well. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils take great pride in their community. They celebrate it through the 'international celebration evening' where families share their cultures with each other. This helps to develop pupils' understanding of the local community and wider world.

The notable experiences the school provides are finely woven into the curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the after-school clubs, which help them pursue their interests and hobbies. They are particularly fond of the ceramics and forest school clubs. Pupils learn about different religions and festivals. They routinely debate and discuss important topics such as racism and individual liberty. As one Year 5 pupil said, 'At St. Nicholas, you can be whoever you want to be.'

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and interesting. It is well organised and provides teachers with the essential knowledge that they intend pupils to learn across different subjects and over time. Well-trained staff check and make sure that pupils with SEND have the help and support they need to access the same learning as their peers. Pupils in the resource base are equally well supported and participate fully in wider school life.

Overall, pupils achieve well. Staff use skilful questioning to promote rich discussion using precise vocabulary. For example, in history lessons, pupils talk confidently about the tools, material and food from the Iron and Stone Ages. Staff often check pupils' understanding by revisiting concepts and making connections with previous learning, but this is not yet consistent. This means that sometimes teachers do not know that pupils have gaps in their understanding.

The school promotes a love of reading. Children in Nursery are exposed to many exciting stories that are linked to their learning and develop their love of books from an early age. Pupils enjoy the diverse range of texts that teachers read and share in lessons. Pupils demonstrate a strong appreciation of a range of authors and the books they write. The school has prioritised the importance of early reading. It is determined that younger pupils learn to read swiftly. Expertly trained staff ensure that they closely follow the phonics scheme. This supports pupils to gradually develop a secure knowledge of sounds and words. Pupils read books that closely match the sounds they have learned. Consequently, pupils develop into fluent and confident readers.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around school. They are highly motivated in lessons and demonstrate superb attitudes to learning. When moving around the school and in the playground, pupils consistently show great self-discipline. Children in early years are equally considerate and co-operate well. Staff swiftly establish very clear routines and model expected behaviour. This helps children to understand how they are expected to behave. The warm and positive relationships encourage children to be highly motivated, even when they face challenges with their learning.

Pupils' personal development is first class. They use their democratic voice to purposefully influence change. For example, pupils raise community awareness about the impact of litter on climate change. They acquire excellent discussion and debating skills. Pupils experience working with a range of visitors such as scientists, engineers and artists during STEM weeks. This helps them to learn about different potential careers. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of healthy relationships and fundamental British values. This helps them to develop an exceptionally strong understanding of equality and diversity. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'Everyone is welcome here, no matter where they come from.'

Leaders, including governors, know the school well and what needs to further improve. They hold each other to account well. Leaders engage well with staff and are committed to their development. They provide high-quality training which supports staff to develop their teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the assessment of pupils' learning lacks precision. As a result, staff do not accurately identify pupils' gaps in learning. The school should ensure that staff know the precise knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn and remember and make sure that teachers routinely check pupils' understanding of this content.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123021
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10287934
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Robert Fletcher
Headteacher	Julie Holland
Website	www.stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for 15 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who use the provision have autism. The specially resourced provision is known as the CIRB (the communication and interaction resource base).
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, physical education and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school and observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- The inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View and an inspector also talked with parents.
- The views of staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including during classroom visits as well as at playtimes and lunchtime.

Simon Woodbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Brinkley

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Yeoman

Ofsted Inspector

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