

**Penistone St John VA Primary School**  
**School Teaching and Learning Review 23/24<sup>th</sup> January 2017**  
**On behalf of Sheffield Diocese**

**School Improvement Reviewer** Andrew Clark

**Headteacher** Antoinette Drinkhill

URN 136941

**Contextual Information**

The school is larger than an average-sized primary school

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (eligible for pupil premium funding) is below average

The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is average overall

The majority of pupils are from white British families. A smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school was last inspected in February 2013, a year after it open as a new school formed from the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school. The school was judged to be outstanding by Ofsted.

**The review**

During the review the reviewer observed teaching and learning throughout the school and visited all classes. He was accompanied by different members of the senior leadership team. Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions held with groups of pupils including members of the school council. Discussions were held with the headteacher and members of senior and middle leadership. A discussion was held with members of the governing body. A wide range of leadership, governance, safeguarding, teaching and assessment documents, including the school's website, were analysed. The visit was planned to provide reflection on the school's current development needs. It was not intended to be an Ofsted style review. However, judgements were developed in discussion with the senior management reflecting criteria from the 2016 Common Inspection Handbook.

**The judgements of this review:**

Leadership and management:	Outstanding
Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, Welfare and Behaviour	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding

## Leadership and management

The headteacher and her senior management team **provide outstanding leadership**. They set the tone for the school and provide an excellent example to staff, parents and pupils through **their energy, thoroughness and imagination**. They establish a very clear purpose which is accurately summed up in the school's vision statement; 'Working together in friendship and faith, learning for life.' Leaders create and sustain a **warm, exciting and ambitious environment** where team work and respect for others underpin the high standards pupils achieve.

The headteacher devolves leadership extremely well throughout the school. All staff are keen and well supported to **take significant and systematic leadership roles**. The school has fervently continued to review the impact of all aspects of its provision on pupils' outcomes as recommended at its most recent Ofsted inspection. Change and improvement are whole school **collective** affairs but everyone has clear and precise roles in achieving their part. This is very evident in the developments to the curriculum and teaching of phonics, writing and mathematics, for example. Subject development is based on **structured research**, high expectations and regular monitoring and evaluation.

Leaders make excellent use of a wide range of strategies, **including analysis of data**, teachers' planning, book reviews and pupil discussions to sustain high outcomes. The senior leadership are extremely reflective and self-critical. Staff make rigorous use of new assessment procedures at all stages to inform planning and future development. They have an **excellent knowledge** of individual and group differences in achievement. Consequently, there are very few significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils over time. Staff set highly challenging targets for pupils in all subjects and review them frequently.

The curriculum is extremely skilfully structured and **very exciting**. Staff plan lessons to accelerate pupils' progress and secure learning and mastery of key skills. They provide myriad opportunities to apply these skills through different subjects. For example, pupils have been strongly motivated to produce high quality individual work through a history topic on the Celts and Anglo-Saxons. They produced excellent examples of work in art, design and technology, mathematics, science and writing. Pupils' increasingly effective collaborative and independent learning skills **prepare them extremely well** for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils' lives are enriched by specialist teaching in musical, artistic and sporting activities within and beyond the school day. The pupils are **very successful** in inter-school local and area sporting competitions including boys' and girls' football and gymnastics, for example. They participate in stimulating visits including residential visits during their school career which makes a very significant contribution to their personal, social and learning development. The school's commitment to the wider world is evident in their environmental and healthy lifestyle awards.

Procedures for **safeguarding are effective**. The headteacher and the safeguarding member of the governing body are rigorous in ensuring staff are appropriately vetted and trained. Policies and procedures, including the single central record, are fully up to date.

The governing body is extremely effective. They provide robust support and challenge to the leadership. They have a well-planned role in evaluating all aspects of school improvement planning. They are extremely reflective and make very good use of a wide range of skills to efficiently fulfil their responsibilities.

The school has excellent relationships with other education providers. Several members of the senior management team and other staff take leading roles in curriculum and teaching development locally and nationally.

### **Teaching, Learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching is **outstanding**. The leadership team set high expectations for all aspects of teaching and behaviour management that form a secure basis for pupils' learning. There are excellent systems in place to support staff develop the curriculum. This is evident, for example, in the steps taken to ensure that the bronze, silver and gold targets in mathematics lessons give a high yet appropriate level of challenge and that the methods for phonics teaching are closely matched to children's individual learning styles.

**Lessons are extremely well planned** with a positive emphasis on helping pupils develop the skills they need to learn independently. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education including transition to secondary school. The enrichment of pupils' independent learning skills and attitudes is a focus for further development.

**Assessments are precise and accurate**. They are based on a very good knowledge of expectations for all ages and abilities. Staff have roles as moderators and assessors at local and national levels which deepen their experience. The assessments are used well to set challenging expectations in all subjects. The current targets for pupils' achievement are largely beyond national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. They are very rigorously and effectively pursued.

Teachers **question pupils deeply and consistently**. They expect and receive clear and well-thought-out answers in response. This contributes to pupils understanding and recall of key English and mathematical facts. For example, skilful questioning in English lessons helped pupils to develop their knowledge and application of exciting story endings based on different scenarios in a gothic horror genre.

Lessons are **imaginative and stimulating**. The teachers provide a 'hook' to pupils learning at the start of lessons or themes which invariably motivates pupils. They make very good use of a wide range of stimulating resources. Teachers make excellent use of technology to engage, motivate and inform pupils. For example, power points are very well produced to help pupils systematically and rapidly build their skills and test their knowledge. Visualisers are regularly

used to share pupils' on-going work and develop editing and other skills. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits and visitors.

**Pupils' comprehension, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills** are very well taught. They have many opportunities to read and write for a wide range of purposes and this contributes to the fluency and productivity in reading and writing skills.

Children in the **early years** are strongly supported to develop a **love of learning** and curiosity about the world around them. Activities are extremely well planned to engage their interest and rapidly build their skills and understanding. For example, children thoroughly enjoy developing physical, mathematical and scientific skills through planning and building igloos for penguins using tweezers and sugar cubes.

**Teachers' expectations are high.** Work is well presented by pupils of all abilities. The marking and feedback procedures are consistently applied and enthusiastically responded to by the pupils.

**Teaching assistants** often make an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. They work in close partnership with teachers and have a good understanding of pupils' needs. Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, benefit from the quality of support and challenge they receive.

Pupils are **very effectively engaged in improving their own work.** They set themselves high standards which are evident, for example, in the high standards reached in many subjects and their commitment to homework project tasks. Teachers make very good use of marking and feedback to help pupils' rapidly reach the next steps in their learning.

Above all, the overall quality of teaching **leads to learning which is engaging and challenging** for all groups of learners including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Teachers successfully prepare pupils for the next stage of their education in a reflective Christian ethos.

## **Personal development, well-being and behaviour**

**Pupils' behaviour is outstanding.** Teachers give them credit for their success and help them to recognise strengths in their behaviour and attitudes. Children from the early years on take **significant responsibility** for their own behaviour and conduct. They recognise right from wrong. This is evident in the displays of work on aims and values and the contribution they can make to society. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Children in the early years settle in extremely quickly and learn to play and work safely together. Pupils are very polite to each other. **Classrooms are tidy and well organised.** Daily routines are very clear and well established. Thus, pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

Pupils' **attitudes to learning** are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and evident throughout the curriculum. Pupils take an extremely wide range of responsibilities very seriously from dinner monitors to school councillors. They contribute to their own progress and personal development well. Children aim high and take a pride in their work. There are many examples of reflective and thoughtful comments about their own and others work. Children in the early years look after their toys and resources extremely well.

Pupils' attendance is above average for all groups of learners the school has **extremely high expectations for punctuality and attendance** which are shared with parents. Teachers ensure that every moment of the day is stimulating and engaging.

Above all, staff treat pupils with **immense respect** and the pupils respond in kind. Pupils feel confident and very well supported in all their school experiences. This is a key factor in pupils' highly positive learning and development.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Since the previous inspection, the leadership has continued to make full use of rigorous assessment procedures **to identify and address** any variations or gaps in pupils' learning promptly and efficiently. Staff have responded well to the increased demands of the new National Curriculum. This is largely reflected in **standards reached in the most recent National tests and assessments**.

Children enter the early years with a very **wide range of skills and knowledge**. They make excellent progress from their **individual starting points**. The school acts quickly to address any differences between achievement of different groups, such as gender or disadvantage. By the time, they start Year 1 children **have made excellent progress overall** and leave with standards which are increasingly above the national average and rising rapidly.

Pupils' achievement in speaking, reading and writing is **outstanding**. Pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their well-reasoned views. This is in direct response to all staff's consistent high expectations and well-targeted questions. Pupils of all abilities often read with **exceptional fluency** whatever their ability and with deep understanding. They express clear preferences including popular and classic fiction including Roald Dahl, J.R.R Tolkien and Rudyard Kipling and a wide range of non-fiction.

Children bring **colour and life** to their writing with very good use of grammar and punctuation. Handwriting is joined, cursive and neatly formed. Pupils' **write fluently** and productively, including those who sometimes find learning difficult. They make very good use of jotters to practice and improve their writing.

Pupils very good progress in reading is increasingly reflected in the results of checks for pupils' phonic skills in Year 1. Improvements to the **organisation of teaching** means all groups of pupils achieved well in national screening tests

Achievement in mathematics is high overall. Pupils **work accurately** and neatly which means that they make few errors when setting out numbers. They make very good use of a wide range of strategies such as number lines to count on in groups or multiples of numbers. They use **precise mathematical terms**. Their knowledge of shape and measure is extremely good. They make excellent progress in applying these skills and solving problems. They use an **accurate mathematical vocabulary**. The school has taken strong action to raise the proportion of pupils working at greater depth.

There are **no significant differences** in the achievement of different groups of pupils' overtime, including disadvantaged pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their individual starting points.

The pupils' work books and displays around school consistently show the high levels of progress and achievement all groups of learners make. **Excellent standards** of art, geography, history, science and many other subjects are evident throughout the school.

### **Key recommendation of this review**

The school is extremely well placed to continue to improve.

They have identified building on pupils' very effective independent learning skills as an area for further development and evaluating the impact on their achievement.

## **Additional Considerations**

Addressing the relative inconsistencies observed during learning walks during the review:

- pupils' productivity during lessons and minimising time lost to organisation/routines
- ensuring pupils are clear about what they need to do before they start their individual work
- maintaining rigorous and high expectations throughout the lesson

More clearly identify the overarching priorities for school development so that all members of the school community are clear about the contribution they can make to achieving them

Summarising the school's main strengths and areas for development more succinctly through the self- evaluation

Review the presentation of the analysis of data on pupils' achievement to make it accessible and useful to all stakeholders and educational professionals