

Inspection of a good school: The Urswick School - A Church of England Secondary School

Paragon Road, Hackney, London E9 6NR

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their school and enjoy coming here. They speak proudly of their community and refer to it as a family. They know they can go to their 'Urswick parents', their form tutors, whenever they need help. The school is a safe space for pupils.

Pupils appreciate the school's work on equality and diversity. The 'Urswick includes' sessions give pupils the chance to develop greater tolerance and respect. Pupils value that everyone receives a daily free meal.

Bullying and harassment are not accepted and do not happen frequently. Staff deal with any incidents and make sure that they do not reoccur. Pupils are calm and purposeful when they move around the school. In lessons, they show positive attitudes to their learning and respect towards their teachers. Low-level disruption is not accepted. School records, however, show that poor behaviour does happen and leaders deal with it firmly.

The broad range of enrichment activities on offer reflects leaders' ambition for pupils. As part of the 'Stepping Stones' programme, a range of guest speakers visit the school. Leaders support students with mentoring to apply to prestigious universities. These activities raise pupils' aspirations. Older pupils also mentor younger pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Literacy projects across various subjects promote extended writing in a range of contexts.

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

Leaders want all pupils to succeed in line with the school motto, 'believe and achieve'. There is a broad range of subjects for pupils to study. These are planned, so that pupils

build their knowledge step by step over time. But, in several subjects, teachers have a lot of freedom in how they deliver the curriculum. This means that these subjects are not always delivered as intended. For example, in history, teachers do not cover content in the same depth. In mathematics, some teachers deliver the extension topics without covering core content first. Pupils develop gaps in learning and miss important connections when this happens.

Pupils with SEND mainly receive extra support within their lessons. Leaders review the strategies used to support these pupils regularly and share them with teachers. However, sometimes, this is not evident in pupils' work. When tasks are not sufficiently tailored to meet their needs, pupils with SEND struggle to fully make sense of their learning.

Leaders have put in place arrangements to assess pupils regularly. Typically, teachers use this information to address any misconceptions in pupils' learning. However, when plans are not adapted following assessment and weaker areas revisited, pupils, including those with SEND, find it harder to master key knowledge and skills.

In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is broad and balanced for the majority of pupils. However, not all pupils study some of the subjects offered to others. For example, pupils learning Mandarin miss out on some of their design and technology lessons. Leaders make the development of pupils' reading a priority. Pupils attend weekly lessons and their progress is tracked. Pupils who do not improve their reading remain on the programme for a longer period of time. But these pupils miss out on learning in other subjects, such as foreign languages.

Teachers in the sixth form have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to plan a series of lessons, which develop students' understanding. The tasks set help students remember their prior learning and formulate it into extended responses.

A large proportion of pupils leave the school every year. While appropriate systems are in place to manage this process, leaders and governors do not maintain rigorous oversight of relevant patterns of pupil movement, for instance in relation to some vulnerable groups.

Leaders are very supportive of teachers and care about their well-being. They provide opportunities for staff to work in teams and share their experience with others. These initiatives have a positive impact on reducing workload. In particular, they make more effective use of the time teachers spend planning lessons and marking assessments. Staff feel well supported by leaders in implementing the systems for managing pupils' behaviour. These are applied consistently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all the relevant and required safeguarding checks are carried out.

Staff receive regular training. They understand how to share their concerns with leaders. Pupils feel safe in and around the school and they know how to seek help if they require it. Pupils are confident that the school deals promptly with the issues they report.

Leaders work with the local authority and other agencies to make sure pupils get the support they need. They identify those who are more vulnerable and offer activities targeted at reducing risks for them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not implement the curriculum as planned. When this happens, pupils develop gaps in learning and find it hard to establish clear links between the concepts learned. Leaders should quality assure the implementation of the curriculum more robustly.
- The key stage 3 curriculum has been narrowed for some pupils, including some pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not have the opportunity to gain the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum remains broad and balanced for all pupils for as long as possible.

Background

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 March 2017.

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	100284
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10212355
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	884
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roger Pryce
Headteacher	Richard Brown
Website	www.theurswickschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school. It received its last section 48 inspection on 13 and 14 October 2021.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers. One of the registered providers used commissions places at another registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and governors, and discussions with the school improvement partner, the diocesan advisor and staff at

the alternative provision. During the inspection, they spoke with pupils about life at school and their work.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors also visited lessons in other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. They also reviewed information about pupils' behaviour and removal from the school's roll.

Inspection team

Luisa Bonelli, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Debbie Lebrecht

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2022