

Inspection of a good school: St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Wordsworth Road, London N16 8DD

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

St Matthias Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and friendly school filled with lots of positive energy. Pupils are kind and support each other, such as in warmly welcoming new arrivals. Pupils said that adults take good care of them. Adults help pupils if they get stuck in their learning. They also deal effectively with any concerns that pupils share with them. Pupils are safe and feel so.

From the time children arrive in the early years, staff teach them a set of routines to develop their social interaction. For example, children learn to share, take turns and tidy up without any fuss. Underpinned by a set of shared values and reminders, pupils behave sensibly and maturely throughout the day. Staff sort out any tiffs in a restorative manner. They help pupils to restore their friendships and avoid disagreements in the future.

Leaders keep the curriculum under review. They seek to ensure that all pupils can achieve in their studies. They also strive to widen pupils' cultural capital to help them succeed in life. Leaders also provide a range of enrichment experiences to enhance pupils' wider development. As a result, pupils achieve well academically. They are also very well supported to develop socially. The thoughtfully planned and delivered early years curriculum prepares children well for Year 1.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and rich curriculum. It meets the goals of the national curriculum. Curriculum thinking is also informed by four strands that support leaders' vision for education and how this is translated into the classroom, such as in their selection of reading texts. These strands are identity, our world, our voice (social action) and our future. This vision is intended to support pupils to understand how the new knowledge that they gain relates to them. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and ask questions with confidence. All of this supports pupils to succeed in their future lives and play a positive role in society.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. They have embedded a well-sequenced phonics programme. All staff across the school have the expertise to deliver it effectively. Staff often check on pupils' progress. They provide timely support to those needing extra help. As a result, pupils become confident and fluent readers.

In this small school, class teachers take on subject leadership roles. Leaders and other staff benefit from internal and external training. They also share strong practices with their counterparts in other schools. Leaders have thought about and identified the knowledge they want pupils to know. They have logically ordered the teaching of new knowledge. This enables pupils to build their knowledge and understanding, step by step. Across the subjects, staff also give much attention to developing pupils' vocabulary and oracy. Subject leaders liaise with early years staff. Together, they ensure that children build the foundational knowledge they need to succeed when they enter Year 1. Teachers choose suitable activities and resources that help pupils to grasp new knowledge. Teachers often check on pupils' knowledge. They use the information to address misconceptions and provide extra support. For example, pupils who fell behind in mathematics, owing to challenges during the pandemic, receive extra bespoke tutoring after school. As a result, pupils achieve well overall.

Teachers also use a variety of ways to help pupils to revise and recall prior knowledge. However, in a few subjects, approaches used to help pupils retrieve and remember knowledge are not routinely sharp enough. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not remember long-term essential subject-specific knowledge. In these instances, pupils' achievement is not as strong as it could be.

Leaders have established well-embedded systems to identify, assess and plan to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use a range of therapists to support pupils and to train staff in how to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. These pupils, therefore, access the same curriculum as their classmates.

Children in the early years concentrate well during formal teaching times. They also engage purposefully, as they are curious, in a range of informal play and learning activities. Older pupils are also keen to learn and work with diligence during their lessons. These positive attitudes contribute well to pupils' successes.

Leaders ensure that all classes are taken on several enrichment visits every year. These include educational outings to museums, art galleries, classical musical performances and theatres. All pupils have their class artwork collages exhibited in the local library. Pupil authors and poets also have opportunities for their work to be displayed and published. From Year 4 upwards, classes go on several residential trips. These are part of a broader programme to develop pupils' independence, resilience and team-building skills.

Staff said that leaders are approachable and considerate of their welfare. Leaders do what they can to ensure that staff do not have an onerous workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know the pupils and their parents and carers very well. Staff are vigilant and report all concerns they have; even if they appear minor. The safeguarding team monitor this information plus any related concerns raised about pupils' behaviour. They make timely referrals to a range of agencies to get the help that pupils, and as appropriate their families, need to support their safety and welfare. Vetting procedures for the appointment of new staff to check they are fit to work with pupils are suitable.

Pupils are taught about how to form healthy relationships and about risks and how to keep safe such as online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, there are some inconsistencies in staffs' approaches to ensuring pupils revise their work in order to embed key knowledge in their long-term memories. This means that, sometimes, pupils are not routinely enabled to achieve as highly as they could because they forget essential knowledge. Leaders should identify precisely the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember long-term and establish agreed and routinely implemented strategies to bring this about across the subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2013.

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](#)' 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	100267
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10289774
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Clark
Headteacher	Lucy Blewett (headteacher) Sian Davies (executive principal)
Website	https://www.st-matthias.hackney.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there has been a decline in the number of pupils on roll.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2016.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. He held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. He also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, the federation's executive headteacher, other senior leaders, a member of the federated governing body and the chair of the local advisory board. He also spoke with the local authority school improvement partner as well as the London Diocesan Board for Schools adviser.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff.
- The inspector had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and spoke with some parents in the playground. He also considered the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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 2023