

Inspection of a good school: St John's Church of England Primary School

Peel Grove, Bethnal Green, London E2 9LR

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Outcome

St John's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The community is very important to everyone at this school. As one pupil said, 'I feel like I am part of a family.' Leaders put pupils' welfare at the centre of their work. They make sure that pupils from all backgrounds feel valued and safe. As a result, bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff deal with it quickly. They help pupils talk through any disagreements they have with each other. This helps pupils learn from their mistakes and to form positive relationships. Pupils try hard to look after one another.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. They expect pupils to do their best by working hard. Pupils respond well to this challenge and enjoy learning new things. They talk about their exciting lessons. Pupils look forward to activities such as designing a cityscape as part of their 'architecture in school project.'

Teachers expect pupils to behave well both in lessons and around the school. This is reinforced through the 'golden rules' which shine through the work of the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and listen respectfully to each other. They are proud of their school and enjoy telling visitors about what they do.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and broad. All pupils study a wide range of subjects as set out in the national curriculum and they achieve well. Leaders and staff try to make learning relevant to pupils. For example, in history, they explore the cultural heritage of different civilisations. Some pupils are descended from these civilisations. This helps pupils to understand and respect the similarities and differences of the different cultures within their class.

Leaders have rightly ensured that early reading is a priority. Children begin learning to read as soon as they arrive in the early years. In Year 1, pupils use strategies to segment and blend sounds which help them read more difficult words. Staff are well trained and model these strategies well. Teachers check which sounds pupils know and

remember with regular assessments. If a child has any difficulties, they are quickly spotted and are given individual support to help them catch up. Children read books that are well matched to the sounds they learn. This helps them to read with confidence. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and listening to stories. They have favourite books and talked about why they like them.

Leaders have ensured the curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. Staff have access to a range of resources which helps to support their planning. Pupils use their prior knowledge to help them understand new learning. For example, in mathematics pupils used their knowledge of equivalence to help them simplify fractions.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. In mathematics, for instance, pupils enjoy the challenge of solving 'marvellous mistakes.' They find out where a calculation has gone wrong and work together to suggest different ways to solve it. Pupils said that this helps them to improve their reasoning skills. If any pupil falls behind, staff are swift to step in and offer additional support.

In most subjects, staff have clearly identified the subject knowledge pupils need to know. They plan lessons so that pupils can build up their knowledge. In a few subjects, staff have not focused sharply on the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils need to learn. This means that, at times, pupils struggle to understand key words and concepts.

Leaders carefully monitor the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have clear strategies to identify individual needs. Staff are well trained in adapting learning for pupils. Leaders work effectively with a range of professionals if more support is needed.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. If there are any issues, staff are quick to address them. This means that lessons are not disrupted.

Leaders and staff work hard to offer a variety of experiences beyond the classroom for all pupils. Leaders paused extra-curricular activities because of COVID-19 restrictions but most have now restarted. Pupils enjoy visits to different places of worship and local museums. They spoke enthusiastically about the sporting and musical activities on offer, such as athletics and African drumming. Pupils like taking part in tournaments and competing with other schools in the area.

Leaders and governors carefully consider staff workload when implementing changes and new procedures. Leaders regularly check staff well-being and staff feel supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have regular training which helps them to understand how to keep children safe. Strong systems help to make sure that concerns are followed up quickly. Leaders keep

staff up to date with any ongoing issues. Leaders work well with parents and carers and professionals to provide the help that some families and pupils need.

Pupils said they feel safe at school and are taught about how to stay safe online. Staff look after pupils well and help them to understand risks so that they know how to stay safe out of school. This includes road safety and not talking to strangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, staff have not precisely identified the subject-specific vocabulary pupils need to be taught. This means that, at times, pupils struggle to fully understand and explain their learning because they do not know what keywords and concepts mean. Leaders should further develop curriculum plans so that pupils are taught subject-specific vocabulary in all 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 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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	100953
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10200368
Type of school	Nursery and Primary
School category	Maintained voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Robin Precey
Headteacher	Terry Bennett (executive headteacher) Darren Rubin (executive head of school)
Website	http://www.st-johns.towerhamlets.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The school's last section 48 statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) was 28 June 2016.
- The executive head of school was appointed in 2017.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school is in a hard federation with St Paul's Whitechapel Church of England Primary School. The executive headteacher and the executive head of school oversee both schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher, executive head of school, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the business manager, a

representative from the local authority and four members of the governing body including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a group of staff.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as well.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the safeguarding arrangements at the school. He examined the single central record of the checks undertaken to make sure that staff are suitable to work in school. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- The inspector considered 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Lloyd, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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