

St Alban's Church of England Primary School

Baldwins Gardens, Holborn, London, EC1N 7SD

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding from their well below average starting points. Progress is typically excellent for all pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium funding, because of well-planned, very challenging and effectively resourced lessons.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and lessons are interesting. Pupils demonstrate a great desire for learning. As a result, pupils are very keen to start tasks and activities. Their learning is outstanding.
- Pupils adore school and as a result their behaviour is outstanding. They get on exceptionally well together. Their manners are immaculate and their attendance is above average.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and are highly skilled. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do exceptionally well and their progress is outstanding.
- Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school and would recommend it to others.
- The local authority uses the school as a centre of excellence.
- The governing body is highly effective in carrying out its duties. Governors are extremely diligent in ensuring the school is continually striving to better itself. They have an excellent understanding of the pupil premium.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work tremendously closely and their vision is clear. The headteacher is an excellent role model to the school community.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors attended one assembly, one whole-school mass and breakfast club, sampled pupils' work and listened to them read.
- They held meetings with leaders and managers, pupils and staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met informally with parents and carers and took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.
- They observed the school's work and looked closely at a number of documents, including the school's information about pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, the self-evaluation document, reports from the local authority, policies and procedures for safeguarding, attendance figures and information on the monitoring of teaching and on the management of teachers' performance.
- The inspectors also analysed 24 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Emma Merva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Adams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school serving an inner-city London community.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding to be used for children in local authority care, children of service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well above average. The highest proportion is of Bangladeshi heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The school has received the following awards Camden Award for Inclusion, International School Award, Enhanced Healthy Schools Award and Healthy Schools London Bronze Award

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be more involved in reviewing their own work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are well below the levels typically found at their age. They settle quickly because of the support and very caring environment. They make rapid progress in personal and social development and phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) because of very well-organised lessons which provide individual support for all children. For example, at fruit time children were taking turns to speak politely to each other.
- Rapid progress continues throughout the school and pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve above average standards. The most able pupils in the school also make rapid progress and attain highly.
- Reading features prominently across the school and in classrooms. Pupils are given many opportunities to become fluent readers through the well-planned use of a different variety of texts, books and magazines. Their attainment, as shown in the national end of Year 1 phonics screening check, is well above average.
- Standards are high in many subjects across the curriculum, for example, in a Year 4 science lesson pupils promptly started investigating and writing about the characteristics of rocks. They demonstrated their resilience and could explain their findings using correct scientific vocabulary and, as a result, they made outstanding progress.
- The school is fully inclusive. As a result disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as additional language, including those from Bangladeshi heritage, make outstanding progress. This is as a result of appropriate well-timed interventions, excellent resources and small-group support.
- Pupils have very effective equal opportunities to succeed so that the achievement of all groups is outstanding. As a result of additional one-to-one support, booster classes and access to a family worker, pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make excellent progress.
- The gap between pupils supported through the pupil premium and other pupils is closing rapidly. In 2013 they were two terms behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit well from the additional sports funding initiative. For example, in a Year 1 physical education lesson pupils made outstanding progress while performing balances using short and long body parts.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is typically outstanding across all phases and year groups. Classrooms are vibrant and excellent places to learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive and encourage pupils to explore their understanding of what they are learning.
- Pupils' books are consistently well marked enabling them to understand their current progress and how to improve. There is a high expectation of all pupils and a key feature of marking is the next steps they must make to improve their work.
- Assessment is rigorous and offers challenge to all groups of pupils. This rigorous assessment enables teachers to plan lessons which are highly effective, consequently enabling pupils to make outstanding progress. However, sometimes pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to review their own work.
- Learning is enjoyed by all pupils because teachers plan extremely detailed and very effective lessons. Teachers engage pupils through using successful questioning strategies and varied activities. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson pupils eagerly answered questions regarding what they liked about their trip to the local community. As a result pupils'

understanding was enhanced and their progress was outstanding.

- Children in Nursery and the Reception class also enjoy a high quality of teaching. Adults provide very effective role modelling and contribute successfully to the development of children's language and personal and social development. They make sure that the children get on well together and develop a thirst for learning.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is excellent in all year groups. For example in a small-group session pupils read words such as 'planet' and 'grabbed'; then they progressed rapidly to building sentences using the phrase 'the panting tiger'.
- Additional adults make a considerable contribution to pupils' understanding and learning. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, a small group of pupils benefited from high-quality support to enable them to make outstanding progress in understanding poetry comparisons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding and they thrive in this excellent school. They demonstrate very positive and caring attitudes to each other. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and it is given the highest priority by all pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is routinely outstanding. Pupils get on extremely well together and with the adults in school. One pupil commented, 'This is a family; we are a community.' Parents and carers also believe that behaviour is exceptional.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of cyber bullying and are clear that there is no bullying in school. If any bullying did occur they know which adults to go to in school. This is further supported through safety workshops and personal and social education.
- Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to take responsibility around the school and they really enjoy these roles, including peer mediation and library mentors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils enjoy using the safe space in 'the den' and on the playground they enjoy a wide range of activities, including organised games. Consequently the playground is a calm, safe haven.
- Attendance is above average. It is given a high priority and effective systems are employed.
- Behaviour, racism and bullying are analysed very well by the school, but show no pattern because there are only a few recorded incidents. 'We just don't get into trouble', said one pupil.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's welcoming ethos is driven inspiringly by the headteacher and is fully appreciated by parents and carers. One parent or carer commented, 'The headteacher's door is always open.' She offers challenging leadership which is supported extremely well by the deputy headteacher. They have very high expectations of both pupils and staff. The school has improved rapidly and continually strives to do even better. The track record of improving achievement and teaching supports their capacity for further improvement.
- The school receives excellent light touch support from the local authority and is used as a centre of excellence.
- Accurate and regular checks are made on teaching and pupils' learning. There is a strong model of support and coaching for teachers. This enables them to rapidly develop skilled teaching methods. Subject leaders make a strong contribution to this culture of improvement.
- Performance management is fully in place and is thorough. Staff have the opportunity to reflect on their practice during the cycle. The links between pay progression and performance management are embedded. These ensure that only quality teaching linking to pupils' progression is rewarded by additional pay.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors during the

inspection are very pleased with the leadership of the school. One parent or carer commented, 'I welcome the efforts made by the staff to ensure the children do well.' Staff also articulate that they feel fully supported and have pride in being part of the school community.

- Pupils enjoy an interesting and very diverse curriculum. It offers a mixture of subjects and is extremely broad and balanced. The curriculum is enhanced by additional subjects, such as French. Trips and visits are a prominent part of the curriculum, for example, pupils take part in a debate at a local barristers' chambers. The school also provides a very effective programme of sports, and before- and after-school clubs. Pupils participate in the leadership decisions through the well-run school council and pupil voice. As a result, they have many opportunities to learn about democracy.
- Sports funding has been very well utilised and staff have benefited from high-quality training to teach additional physical education aspects. For example all staff benefited in participating in a workshop on teaching gymnastics.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is of a high quality. It is well developed and meticulously planned. Pupils are regularly encouraged to consider right from wrong and are reflective in their actions. Religious festivals are celebrated promoting tolerance and consideration of other faiths. Pupils from all backgrounds get on exceptionally well in this faith school. Consequently pupils work exceptionally well together.
- Safeguarding requirements are in place and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an exceptional contribution to the school and governors visit regularly. They have an excellent understanding of the performance of the school compared to national averages. They are continually striving to 'be the best' and offer a superb balance between challenge and support. Governors make sure they are kept up to date through attending regular training events and access courses, such as 'Being a new governor', and in performance management and safeguarding.
 - The school's finances are very well managed and there are clear plans about what the school's financial priorities are. Governors have evaluated the additional funds for pupil premium very well and have provided extra 'top up funding' for this group of pupils and have begun to evaluate the sports funding.
 - They understand the current quality of teaching in the school and ask challenging questions of the leadership team. They are fully involved in pay awards and ensure that teachers' pay is linked to the pupils progressing well.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory guidelines and requirements. They have a designated safeguarding governor who meets with the school's safeguarding team regularly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100036
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	431279

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Christopher Smith
Headteacher	Mary Thorne
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 January 2014
Telephone number	020 7242 8585
Fax number	020 7242 2285
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