

# St John's Church of England Primary School

Peel Grove, Bethnal Green, London E2 9LR

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>          |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>          |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>          |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b>          |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>          |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b>          |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and headteacher have swiftly improved the school since the last inspection. As a result, standards have improved.
  - Governance is good. Governors know the school well. They support and challenge leaders effectively.
  - The quality of teaching and learning has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now good. Leaders do not shy away from addressing weak teaching. Therefore, pupils in all year groups make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
  - Reading is strength of the school. Pupils show a great love and enjoyment of the wide range of books they read.
  - Children in the early years enjoy a range of exciting activities to support their learning and development. They make good progress and leave the early years well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
  - The level of challenge for some pupils, especially the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils, is not consistently strong enough. Consequently, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
  - Pupils are polite, respectful and well-mannered. They respect each other and adults. Pupils are proud of their achievements.
  - Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils are keen to attend school every day and this contributes to the good progress they make.
  - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are well prepared to take on their role as British citizens.
  - Leaders use the pupil premium funding astutely to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils make good gains in their learning.
- The curriculum offers pupils some meaningful and stimulating learning experiences. However, teachers have not yet embedded opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' learning in a range of subjects.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the quality of teaching learning and assessment consistently challenges all pupils, especially the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, to make the best progress they can.
- Rigorously develop teachers' abilities to provide more opportunities within the new curriculum to extend and deepen pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and headteacher have been relentless in their drive to secure improvements since the last inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching and standards across the school has improved. Parents value and appreciate school leaders' work. One parent said, 'I feel that St John's Church of England Primary School is a very hard-working school because my children enjoy going to school and learning every day.'
- Leaders have successfully built a strong school community within which everyone feels valued and respected. Staff say, 'Everyone pulls together.' Pupils told an inspector, 'We are like a family. Everyone gets on very well.' Similarly, parents endorse this view. One parent commented, 'I have recommended this school to numerous parents and their children now attend this school. It is a great family school.'
- The curriculum is motivating and engages pupils in their learning. The thematic approach to the curriculum makes good connections between different subjects like history and geography. For example, pupils learn about ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome through topics like 'The Great, the Bold and the Brave!' This makes learning fun and meaningful for pupils. The work in pupils' topic books shows there is a range of topics covered in all year groups. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and deepen their learning across all curriculum subjects, as the school has not yet fully developed the curriculum.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced beyond the school through a range of activities such as educational visits to museums, theatres and clubs. Other examples include special events such as World Book Day. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy their learning and coming to school.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding prudently to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, outcomes have improved for these pupils. For example, in 2016 the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attained the standards expected for their age in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above average compared to other pupils nationally. Equally, they made better progress than others nationally. Nevertheless, leaders are aware that the information about the pupil premium strategy on the school website is incomplete.
- The sports funding is used wisely. The school has recruited a health mentor and sport coaches. Pupils benefit from high-quality physical education sessions. For example, an inspector observed a sports coach explaining the art and principles of judo to Year 5 pupils. They were clear about the expectations and rules relating to this sport. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to the sports facilities on offer. Consequently, pupils' confidence has increased and such sporting facilities contribute to their fitness.
- Pupils say that their school teaches them to respect people from other backgrounds and celebrate differences between people. Pupils say, 'We are able to learn about different religions, we become tolerant because we are different in our own ways.' This reflects the school's promotion of tolerance and mutual respect which aligns with fundamental British values.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a variety of ways, such as the curriculum and assemblies. For example, as part of their topic work, pupils work in learning teams on a daily basis. Hence, they develop their social skills and work effectively as team members.
- Leaders are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for their pupils. For example, leaders carefully check how well girls in key stage 2 are achieving in mathematics. The additional support provided leads to them making better progress.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are fulfilling their statutory duties well. They attend training which gives them a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. For example, governors have a better understanding of pupils' communication and language needs. They challenge leaders on the use of additional government funding.
- Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the school. They hold school leaders to account effectively on school improvement. They challenge leaders by questioning them on pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors use their regular visits to the school well to make sure that the policies they have ratified are fully implemented. For example, the chair of the governing body ensures that the safeguarding policies and procedures are followed robustly. He regularly checks that all adults who work with pupils in the school are suitable and checked appropriately.
- Governors have a clear and accurate understanding of how the additional government funding is spent to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils. They monitor the impact of this funding effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has adopted the culture of 'it could happen here' to help them safeguard pupils. Secure and robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils are kept safe. Staff are well trained to notice any changes in pupils' behaviour that might give cause for concern. They are fully aware of the school's internal procedures and know how to raise concerns about pupils' safety and welfare, should they need to do so.
- Parental links are strong. Likewise, the school works very closely with external agencies and the local authority to make sure that pupils, including the most vulnerable, are well cared for. Parents responding to the Parent View (the online survey conducted by Ofsted) agree that pupils are safe and well looked after at school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have successfully addressed weak teaching. They provide bespoke support to teachers to improve their teaching and secure better outcomes for pupils in their classes.
- Although the quality of teaching is good across the school, inspectors noted that occasionally some pupils are not given the right level of challenge in lessons. As a result pupils, including the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils, do not reach

their full potential. Leaders are beginning to address this by checking the quality of teaching across all subjects in all year groups.

- Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme that is taught consistently and systematically across the early years and key stage 1. Teachers and teaching assistants effectively teach phonics and give pupils plenty of opportunities to apply their skills to reading and spelling unfamiliar words within phonics sessions. As a result, pupils make good progress in their phonics.
- Pupils write fluently in different styles and for different purposes. They apply their writing skills to other subjects they are studying as part of their topic. For example, as part of their science topic on materials, Year 6 pupils wrote their own questions to investigate how water freezes and defined scientific vocabulary such as 'molecule' and 'evaporation'.
- Pupils apply their mathematical skills competently to reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils make good gains in their skills and understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils were given a set of temperatures that was measured by a scientist for each day of the week. Pupils were asked to predict the temperature for Saturday from a given set of data.
- Pupils told inspectors they enjoy their learning. The learning environment is stimulating and supports learning. Learning walls around the school and the classrooms, further extend pupils thinking. Pupils say, 'We like our learning walls because we get to "magpie" ideas to make our work better.'
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. They show a good understanding of what they have read. Older pupils in key stage 2 read with accuracy and understanding. They say, 'Reading is fun at St John's. We get to read non-fiction and fiction books.' Pupils visit the school's new library once a week, which demonstrates their enthusiasm for reading.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with class teachers to support individuals and groups of pupils. During a visit to one lesson, an inspector observed how effectively a pupil in Year 2 was supported to answer questions based on pictograms. As a result of the support provided, pupils make good progress in their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors they are proud of their achievements. Their successes and recognition of their hard work are regularly celebrated through weekly assemblies. Pupils are self-assured learners.
- Leaders have introduced the 'daily mile' initiative to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this initiative, which helps them to keep fit and healthy. In the words of pupils, 'The daily mile keeps us fit. It helps to build our stamina and keeps us going when we want to give up.'

- Inspectors, staff and parents agree that the pupils are safe in this school. Pupils say they learn how to keep safe through the curriculum in subjects like personal, social, health and economic education computing and special events like Internet Safety Day. They know how to stay safe online and talked confidently about the filters that have been put in place to prevent pupils from accessing inappropriate sites on the internet that will pose a risk to their safety.
- Parents and staff responding to Ofsted's online questionnaires agree that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Most pupils say that bullying is a rare occurrence and that teachers deal with it successfully, should a concern arise. Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including that which occurs online. The school participates in national initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week to encourage staff and pupils to prevent bullying.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. This contributes to a calm and orderly school environment. Pupils confidently talked to inspectors about the rewards and sanctions system applied to manage pupils' behaviour in school.
- Pupils show high levels of respect to each other and adults, including inspectors. Words like, 'please' and 'thank you' are a commonplace in pupils' vocabulary. They show respect by listening attentively to each other's views. This was experienced first-hand by inspectors during discussions with pupils.
- Attendance is in line with national average. Persistence absence is checked very closely by school leaders. They work closely with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and families. As a result, learning time is maximised.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good across all year groups. The work in pupils' topic books shows that they make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils are working within the standards expected for their age. However, the proportion of pupils making even better than expected progress in writing, mathematics and other subjects is inconsistent across the school. Leaders recognise that this area requires attention and plans are in place to address this.
- Although pupils make good progress overall, levels of challenge are not making consistent enough demands on pupils, particularly for the most able pupils. Work in pupils' books shows that most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do the same work at the same level as all other pupils, when they are clearly capable of working at a higher standard. Most-able pupils frequently work through a range of questions before they are challenged and are not fully stretched. Therefore, they do not achieve their full potential. Leaders are beginning to implement actions to speed up progress for pupils.
- Reading is a clear strength in the school. Phonics is taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1. Consequently, pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils, use their phonics knowledge and skills well to read unfamiliar words well. The school's progress information confirms that disadvantaged pupils make good gains in phonics. Equally,

there is a daily commitment to teaching reading across the school through guided reading. Pupils demonstrate a clear joy and pleasure for reading.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, read accurately and fluently, demonstrating a good understanding of books they have read. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading. Pupils say, 'I am a book worm...I enjoy reading because I find it calming.'
- Writing is taught well across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress. The work in pupils' writing and topic books shows that pupils use their writing skills well to write in a range of styles and contexts in different subjects of the curriculum.
- The school's progress information indicates that pupils, including boys in Year 2 and girls in Year 6, make good progress in mathematics. Inspectors confirmed this during visits to lessons and scrutinising pupils' work their mathematics books. For example, inspectors observed girls making good progress when learning about common multiples.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are working within the expected standards for their age. The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books demonstrate that this is the case.
- The school's progress information indicates that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is the result of leaders carefully assessing pupils' learning needs and providing additional support and specific interventions. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing and tailor the support accordingly to ensure that they make good progress.
- The unvalidated data for the new 2016 tests shows that attainment has improved in each of the key stages. Overall, the proportion of pupils who attained the standards expected for their age and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2 was either close to or above the national averages.
- In 2016, pupils' phonics attainment at the end of Year 1 was below average. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme and are regularly checking pupils' progress to make sure that the current Year 1 pupils meet the expected standards at the end of the year.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years environment is bright, colourful and purposeful. Children are offered a range of interesting activities to promote their learning and development. For example, children in the Nursery sustained concentration when they were making playdough with an adult. Children were fascinated when they observed the colour of the water change as they added food colour to make the playdough.
- In 2016, the proportion of children, including boys and disadvantaged children, achieving a good level of development was above average. Attainment has risen since the last inspection. As a result, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1. Children have acquired the basic skills, coupled with the social and personal skills they need to become independent and confident learners. Similarly, they have developed emotional resilience that will support their learning in key stage 1. Children use their phonics knowledge well to write sentences.

- Additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged children's progress in the early years. The school has recruited a speech and language therapist to work with adults and children to develop children's communication and language skills. The impact of this was clearly evident when an inspector observed children making good gains in the adult-led speaking and listening activities.
- The newly appointed early years leader effectively leads the provision. She has a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. Assessment information is used well to plan children's next steps in learning.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Adults interact with children and provide effective models for speaking and listening. For example, adults model oral sentence construction and children are expected to listen attentively and repeat the sentences. This helps children, particularly children who are new to English, to develop their language skills.
- Children in the early years are polite, respectful and well behaved. They remain focused, both in their own selected activities and in adult-led activities. Children happily play and learn together. They respond swiftly to adults' instructions as they move between different learning groups.
- Adults and parents in the early years enjoy positive relationships. Parents are involved in their child's learning through various activities such as Friday morning reading sessions and visits to the local library. In addition, parents are invited to contribute to their child's 'Special Book'. Parents are invited to workshops, such as on phonics, to help them support their child at home with their learning.
- Children in the early years are safe and cared for well. For example, the doors are securely locked to keep the children safe.



## School details

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Unique reference number | 100953        |
| Local authority         | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number       | 10019655      |

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 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 208  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Ian Graham   |
| Executive Headteacher               | Terry Bennett  |
| Headteacher                         | Sharon Taylor-Sezgin   |
| Telephone number                    | 020 8980 1142  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.stjohns-sch.com">www.stjohns-sch.com</a>                               |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:admin@st-johns.towerhamlets.sch.uk">admin@st-johns.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 11–12 November 2014  |

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium strategy for 2016/17 on its website.
- This school is small compared to the average sized-primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from different minority ethnic groups. White British and Bangladeshi pupils both constitute 30.1% of the school's pupils. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Equally, the proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is well above average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The school runs a breakfast club for all its pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 19 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher, headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during their visits to lessons, playtime and lunchtime. The lead inspector held formal discussion with two groups of pupils. One group comprised of some of the most able pupils in the school in key stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1, 2, 3 and 6.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and assistant headteacher, inclusion leader and middle leaders.
- Meetings were also held with the chair of the governing body and one other governor. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the local authority and London Diocesan Board for Schools.
- An inspector accompanied a group of pupils on a learning walk. Pupils shared their school experiences.
- Inspectors took into account 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and the 27 free-text responses. Inspectors also met with parents informally in the playground.
- Twenty-five responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed a range of school documentation, including the school’s own information on current pupils’ progress, safeguarding and the checks that leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning.
- An inspector attended the whole-school assembly.

## Inspection team

Raj Mehta, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lando Du Plooy

Ofsted Inspector

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