

# St Alban's Church of England Primary School

Baldwins Gardens, Holborn, London EC1N 7SD

## Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

<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	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The interim headteacher and the deputy headteacher are instrumental in driving improvements across the school.
- Teaching is typically good. Occasionally, teaching does not meet some pupils' needs.
- The school's current information on pupils' progress shows a picture of improving outcomes in most year groups.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong.
- Governors know the school well. They offer the school much expertise and knowledge. However, they have not evaluated the impact on pupils' outcomes of additional funding quickly enough.
- The early years provision gives children a very good start to their education. Staff plan and deliver activities which engage children's interests.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum but leaders know it requires further refinement.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare are effective. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. This helps to ensure that they make good progress in their learning by the end of key stage 2.
- The school has put in place a full range of actions to improve pupils' attendance. However, attendance is low and persistent absence is above the national average, particularly for pupils with SEND.

## Full report

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

- Reduce the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by building on the strengths within the school and sharing good practice effectively.
- Intensify efforts to raise attendance further and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Revisit the governing body's strategy for evaluating the use of additional funding, so that reviews are conducted swiftly and findings have greater impact.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The interim headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has swiftly tackled weak teaching and assessment procedures. As a result, the quality of teaching is typically good across the school. They are driving improvements in the school effectively, ensuring that all systems are strong.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and demonstrate potential. They have led changes and these are having an impact on pupils' outcomes. All know what they need to do next to further improve provision in their subject areas. They appreciate the wide range of professional development they receive to support their understanding of their leadership roles and to develop their teaching skills. For example, many teachers have participated in moderation activities with other schools to ensure that assessments are accurate. Many subject leaders attend various network groups to further support their roles. They would appreciate more opportunities to visit other schools to see good practice.
- Leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning have ensured that school self-evaluation is accurate. Development plans clearly identify areas in which improvements need to be made, and actions are kept under review. There is an effective cycle of monitoring the effectiveness of leaders' actions. For example, through effective pupil progress meetings each term, staff discuss individual pupils. Staff identify and promptly address any underachievement. Interventions are implemented and closely monitored, for example tailored guided reading. When necessary, booster groups have been introduced so that all pupils are challenged in their learning.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is very well led and managed. The school has a high proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans. There is a 'provision map' in place for each of these pupils. This is used effectively to evaluate and plan the support for each pupil. Each term, staff meet with parents and carers to share information about their children's learning and progress. They ensure that each pupil has a specific curriculum that meets their individual needs. As a result, individual pupils receive appropriate support and, given their starting points and capabilities, make good progress.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress in all areas of learning. Sports funding is used well to provide a range of additional sporting opportunities. It is also increasing opportunities for pupils to learn to swim.
- The school's curriculum is based on the statutory requirements of the national curriculum as well as the needs of the school's community. It seeks to enable all pupils to 'achieve personal excellence', and aims to prepare them to be 'well-balanced citizens to live in an ever changing and demanding world'. Leaders consider the content of the curriculum carefully. For example, in geography, a contrasting location is Bangladesh because this is the largest ethnic group in the school. Subject leaders have become more involved in the development of the curriculum, but leaders appreciate there is more to do.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities, both before and

after school. A sports specialist provides opportunities for pupils to learn specific skills and participate in different sports. Staff also provide opportunities for pupils to learn skills in, for example, computing, art and crafts, drama and cooking.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded well throughout the school's broad and rich curriculum. This includes school assemblies, where teachers focus on global and current issues, such as the plight of refugees. The school chooses a value for each half term. During the inspection, the theme was 'forgiveness'. Pupils learned what they need to do to forgive somebody. This work links closely to the school's vision and values.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and British values. Staff choose texts carefully and use these well to promote the school's values. Consequently, pupils spoke with knowledge and maturity to inspectors about what key values mean, and the different types of families, cultures, race, beliefs and religions that are represented in their community.
- The school's work to develop pupils' awareness of their place in modern Britain is celebrated well through many displays. The school is aspirational for its pupils so that they are prepared for the world of work. In particular, the curriculum ensures that pupils learn about female role models to encourage girls to aspire to be whatever they want.
- Pupils appreciate the range of opportunities to lead and contribute to their school community, for example as school councillors. They have designed a garden and the new library. Pupils also undertake a range of responsibilities with adult support. Year 6 pupils help to prepare school services, both in school and at the local church, as part of the collective worship team.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are enthusiastic about the school. They appreciate the opportunity to meet leaders at the beginning of each term to discuss any additional support for their child.
- The school has a full range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance. This includes the involvement of external agencies. However, pupils' attendance remains low and too many pupils are persistently absent.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils, the improvements necessary and the next steps that need to be taken to improve the school further. They know the school well and have a strong sense of loyalty to it.
- Members of the governing body offer a wide range of skills and experience. They appreciate that pupils' outcomes have not been as they would wish. They play a strategic role in the development of the school. For example, they were instrumental in confirming the appointment of the interim headteacher. They check on the school's performance and challenge the school's leaders as part of their meetings. This is helped by their links to specific aspects of the school's work.
- Governors monitor the school's finances closely. They ensure that these are deployed carefully. However, although governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is planned strategically, their reviews on the impact of this funding are not always fully effective.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have a deep understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and are up to date in their training. This includes understanding the 'Prevent' duty and the signs that a pupil may be at risk of female genital mutilation. Records, such as the child protection register, are meticulously organised. The school promptly refers cases that cause concern and follow these cases through carefully. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that pupils get the support they need.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the specific needs of the community, the challenges facing families and the risks pupils might face. They are very aware of the need to engage with all parents, especially those of vulnerable pupils. Nevertheless, when necessary, clear messages are given to parents. For example, the interim headteacher reminded parents about not bringing their children to school too early to ensure that they are safe. Timely help has provided family mediation to support specific families. The school's curriculum supports pupils' resilience and develops their self-confidence.
- Pupils say the school 'keeps us safe'. The school ensures that pupils know how to stay safe online. Leaders have organised workshops for parents to raise their awareness of the dangers of the internet, and how to stay safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Overall, teachers are aware of the needs of different groups of pupils and work hard to ensure that their needs are met. Teachers provide appropriate additional support so that pupils with SEND can fully engage in lessons. Most-able pupils are challenged through appropriately structured tasks. Sometimes, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Leaders acknowledge the need to share more widely the good practice that exists throughout the school.
- Class routines are well established. Teachers' explanations of what they wish pupils to learn are clear. Teachers plan interesting lessons and seek to make learning challenging, relevant and meaningful. Talk is emphasised in all lessons. This gives pupils many opportunities to discuss their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils enjoyed discussing a video of 'Jungle Book' to support their extended writing. Similarly, Year 4 pupils visiting the local church listened attentively to a visitor talking about the Vikings. They handled artefacts, created drawings from first-hand observations and were animated as they discussed all aspects of Viking life. Such opportunities capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning and extend their knowledge and understanding.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly strong. Pupils are challenged to improve. Where there is good practice, pupils make rapid progress. For example, in English, the use of 'non-negotiables' raises expectations for the correct use of punctuation and capital letters. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, and pupils'

misconceptions are addressed promptly. Occasionally, teachers plan work that is too easy or too difficult because pupils' previous learning has not been consolidated.

- In English, teachers emphasise key features of grammar, including vocabulary. This includes the use of colloquial language when, for example, writing a letter to a parent, pretending to be an evacuee, when one pupil wrote, 'This place ain't nothing compared to London'. The use of technical language is demonstrated across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils were asked to 'predict' the outcomes of an experiment. Such strategies support high-quality writing across the curriculum and reinforce key aspects for each subject.
- All staff receive targeted training. They know their pupils well and understand how they learn. Consequently, this has ensured a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Well-established routines support good progress so that pupils develop their understanding of how stories start and finish and the flow of writing. This enables most pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. Most-able pupils demonstrate excellent handwriting, editing and writing skills.
- Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to read difficult words. As they get older, they read well, with feeling and dramatic expression. Teachers keep records of the books that pupils read and use these to engage pupils in dialogue about different books and authors. Parents are encouraged to read with their children and the teaching of phonics is explained to all new parents.
- Teachers give effective feedback to pupils, especially in English and mathematics. They tell them how well they are doing and where they can improve. Pupils also work together to think about how to improve their work.
- Throughout the school, the deployment of teaching assistants is effective. They skilfully ask questions and provide explanations to support pupils' learning. Pupils supported on a one-to-one basis are helped extremely well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are positive about their learning. They enjoy school and say they 'learn a lot'. They are polite and articulate and understand the importance of working hard.
- Pupils say that bullying does not exist, but they know what they should do if it happened. They know that staff always help to resolve any other problems that occur. School records confirm that instances of bullying are rare. Pupils told inspectors that they are happy at school, reflecting the views shared by their parents.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They learn about the major religions, all of which are celebrated as part of the school's curriculum. Pupils have also been taught about agnostics. Pupils appreciate others' beliefs and non-beliefs.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains too high, especially for specific groups. Strong systems are in place to follow up absence. Attendance is seen as a key factor in promoting good

progress and sustaining positive relationships with parents.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have ensured that behaviour has a high profile in the school. This has benefited all pupils, especially those pupils at risk of exclusion. The school knows these individuals well. The careful monitoring of behaviour helps those pupils who have difficulty in self-regulating. There is very good liaison with external agencies, where necessary, to support the transfer of pupils to secondary school.
- Behaviour around the school is calm. During the inspection, behaviour in classrooms, on the playground and on corridors was never less than good. Leaders stated that this is typical and school documentation confirms it. Pupils respond promptly to teachers' instructions. They say that 'nobody gets bullied here'.
- Pupils fully understand the high expectations for behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are applied consistently, in line with the school's policy.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes across the school are good. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress in English and mathematics. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Published data shows that in 2017, pupils at the end of key stage 2 achieved below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements were made in 2018. Achievement in all subjects was broadly in line with the national averages.
- In 2018, most Year 6 pupils reached at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Work seen in a sample of books shows good rates of progress across the school in English and mathematics. Current assessment information shows that progress in English and mathematics is strong. Assessments are now more secure across the school because of external moderation and the professional development of all staff. One member of staff is a moderator for the local authority.
- Foundations are laid by the end of key stage 1 as a basis for pupils' good progress in key stage 2. By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the expected standards. Over time, an above average proportion of Year 1 pupils have met the standard in the phonics screening check.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 are above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, at least similar to that of others in their classes, with the help of targeted support.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress as a result of the excellent support they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills from a young age. Pupils apply what they have learned in different contexts. Leaders' recent emphasis on improving standards in writing has resulted in improvements.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in speech and language. They make good progress. Nevertheless, on entry to the Reception Year, children still have skills and knowledge which are typically below those seen nationally. All staff know the children well. As a result of good teaching and, where necessary, bespoke programmes to meet the needs of individuals, children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Most children reached the standard expected by the end of Reception Year. Although outcomes were below the national averages in the 2018 assessments, they show that the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development has improved each year since 2015.
- Key leadership actions have been a major factor in improving provision and outcomes. For example, leaders have ensured that the outside provision has been redeveloped so that both Nursery and Reception children can access the area. This is benefiting all children, who play well together across all areas of learning.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the main strengths and areas to develop. Adults plan well for the range of needs. Leaders identify differences in learning and ways to diminish them. They pay particular attention to language and communication and the personal and social aspects of learning. For example, children in the Reception Year learn to identify numbers that are doubled when playing with dominoes. In the Nursery, children develop their letter formation and practise their fine motor skills when using a tablet device. Great emphasis is placed on developing children's fine motor skills, for example in the use of scissors to cut out shapes. Such activities are helping to improve their handwriting.
- Phonics is taught well. It starts in the Nursery, where support is particularly effective for children for whom English is an additional language. A range of activities each day helps children to learn, use and remember different phonemes.
- Staff use resources well to support children's development; for example, pen holders help children in their letter formation. Children who do not communicate verbally receive effective support. Staff ensure that children's literacy skills are well promoted.
- Teachers have high expectations. They assess children's progress accurately through observations and discussions about their work. In both the Nursery and Reception Years, children make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and handwriting.
- Children behave well. They demonstrate increasing confidence, independence and perseverance, building stamina and resilience in the activities in which they are engaged. They listen well and take part cooperatively in all areas of learning.
- Parental engagement is an area that leaders are trying to improve. They have introduced strategies to involve parents. For example, leaders organised a recent bedtime story event.



## School details

Unique reference number	100036
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10058976

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Christopher Smith
Headteacher	Rebecca Harris (interim headteacher)
Telephone number	020 7242 8585
Website	<a href="http://www.stalbanscamden.co.uk">www.stalbanscamden.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@stalbins.camden.sch.uk">admin@stalbins.camden.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	January 2014

## Information about this school

- St Alban's Church of England Primary School was judged as outstanding in January 2014.
- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was on maternity leave. An interim headteacher is in post during this time.
- This is a one-form entry primary school. The early years consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high and in the top 20% nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is high.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Most observations were undertaken with the interim headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with two representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, as they moved around the building, and on the playground.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to discuss their work and experiences at school. Inspectors talked to staff on duty in the lunch hall and on the playground.
- Inspectors met with the attendance officer and staff who oversee the single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress and outcomes across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans, and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to governance, safeguarding, behaviour, complaints, pupils' attendance and welfare.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of books to check the progress pupils make over time.
- Inspectors took account of the information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection, and the 47 responses to the most recent parent questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Rick Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jason Hughes

Ofsted Inspector

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