

# Inspection of Smithy Street Primary School

Smithy Street, Stepney, London E1 3BW

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Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy in this inclusive school. They are polite and friendly. Their confidence shines through in the self-assured welcome they give to visitors.

Pupils are eager to learn. They respond well when teachers set them work that builds on what they already know or can do. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a range of subjects, including in reading. This is because leaders and staff are not clear about what pupils should learn and remember.

Leaders have thought about the experiences that they want pupils to have outside the classroom. Pupils enjoy going on many trips and visits. Pupils remember a lot about these experiences and are keen to talk about them.

In lessons and at playtimes, pupils get on well with each other. Bullying is unusual. Staff deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils are encouraged to manage their behaviour and feelings. Most pupils do this, but some become easily distracted during lessons.

Staff care greatly for the pupils in this school. Positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe because they know that adults are there to look after them.

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

Leaders make sure pupils study a range of subjects. However, leaders have not focused enough on deciding what topics or content pupils should learn. Teachers do not receive enough guidance on what concepts they should teach pupils and in what order. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They do not achieve as well as they should.

In subjects such as science and French, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They spot pupils' misconceptions and adapt activities to help pupils overcome any difficulties. This approach is not evident in other subjects, including writing and mathematics. Teachers do not check that pupils have fully understood what they have been taught. Often, pupils' misconceptions go unaddressed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) find it particularly difficult to keep up. As a result, they do not develop essential knowledge across different subjects.

Leaders want all pupils to read well. In key stage 2, teachers use subject plans to support pupils to become confident readers. Pupils understand the texts that they study and enjoy reading on their own. This is not the case for children in early years and pupils in key stage 1. Leaders and staff have not ensured that pupils become accurate and fluent readers as soon as possible. A small number of pupils find reading difficult. These pupils have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Staff have limited expertise in this area. Pupils who have fallen behind do not receive the support they need to catch up. Often, pupils read books that contain words that

they cannot read. This too prevents them from reading well. It also holds them back when they read texts in other subjects.

In Nursery Year, children get off to a strong start. Children thrive because staff plan their learning carefully. They choose activities that cater for children's needs and interests. Staff place a great deal of importance on reading. They select stories that enthuse children about reading. However, staff do not build on this successfully in Reception Year. Children are not confident in reading. This is because they have not developed appropriate phonics knowledge. Children are not prepared well enough for Year 1.

Leaders have thought about ways to prepare pupils to become healthy and responsible citizens. Leaders provide a wide range of sports activities and encourage all pupils to participate. Some pupils enjoy taking on responsibility through the elected school council. Beyond this, opportunities are limited.

Pupils are taught that not everyone holds the same views and beliefs as they do. As with other subjects, plans for religious education do not set out what pupils should learn. Pupils' understanding of different faiths and beliefs is limited.

Leaders have improved the behaviour of pupils at the school so that they are now more motivated to learn. However, some pupils are distracted in lessons and lose their concentration.

Leaders have made it very clear to families and pupils how important it is to attend school and be on time. Pupils' attendance has now improved. However, some pupils still do not attend school regularly enough.

Leaders care about the well-being of staff and invest in their professional development. Staff said that they appreciate this. They feel well supported. Nevertheless, leaders have not made sure that teachers have the subject knowledge to teach all subjects well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that keeping pupils safe is their highest priority. Leaders carry out the right checks on staff before they start work at the school. All staff receive training and regular updates so that they know how to spot any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Everyone is confident in how to report any concerns.

Records show that leaders respond quickly when concerns arise. When needed, they work closely with external agencies. This means that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school. For example, they are taught how to use playground equipment safely and use the internet sensibly.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the Reception Year and key stage 1 classes, pupils who find it hard to learn to read are not receiving the correct help they need to catch up. Leaders should make sure staff have the expertise to do this. They should also make sure that these pupils read books that are closely matched to their phonics knowledge.
- Across a range of subjects, leaders should make sure that curriculum plans contain clearly defined and ambitious aims for what pupils should learn. Plans should sequence learning logically so that all pupils can build their knowledge and skills successfully. Teachers need to check whether pupils understand their learning and address any misconceptions, particularly for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils can become distracted in their learning and lose focus. Teachers need to ensure that pupils are motivated to learn and understand the work that they have been set.
- The leadership team, including subject leaders, should evaluate how well teachers use subject plans. They should use this information to identify and put in place effective training for staff so that they have the expertise to teach all subjects.
- Leaders have introduced effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance. However, leaders should embed these strategies and make sure all pupils attend school as regularly as they should.
- Pupils do not know enough about cultures and religions different from their own. Leaders have put plans in place to address this. They should continue to make this a priority and ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop the knowledge they need to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

### How can I feedback 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100941
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110493
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ros Coffey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edith Philipsen
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.smithystreet.org.uk/">www.smithystreet.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 March 2009

## Information about this school

- There have been no substantial changes in leadership since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. We also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority. We took into account the 39 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- We looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education. In doing so, we visited classes across all year groups and reviewed pupils' work. We spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read. We also met with teachers.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at

playtimes and lunchtimes. We gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions.

- We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents. We also evaluated information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We gathered the views of parents and carers at the start of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Helena Mills, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Titus	Ofsted Inspector
Jenell Chetty	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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