

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Gospel Oak Primary School

Mansfield Road, London NW3 2JB

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

## **Outcome**

Gospel Oak Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

This is a very happy school. Pupils said that it feels like being in a big family where everybody is kind. Leaders are never complacent, and they have great ambitions for all aspects of the school's work. Pupils feel safe, achieve very well and develop excellent interpersonal skills.

From the moment children join Nursery, staff teach them to behave well, treat everyone with respect and concentrate on their work. Pupils value learning about and celebrating each other's cultures in this diverse community. There is a strong rapport between pupils and adults, and pupils and their peers. As a result, pupils behave extremely well, and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know that staff would deal with any unacceptable behaviour in a quick, fair and restorative manner.

Pupils relish participating in the plentiful enrichment activities on offer. Many activities have now been reinstated following the national lockdowns. There is something for everyone and many are led by external specialists, such as for boxercise. These opportunities range from a variety of sports to drama, Spanish, puppetry, sewing and choir.

Many parents and carers responded to the inspection survey. Almost all were overwhelmingly positive. They highlighted how well their children thrive in this school community.

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

Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review. They make sure that it is broad and ambitious. In planning what pupils study, they take account of the needs of all pupils and prepare them very well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders place reading at the forefront of the curriculum. They know that being able to read fluently will allow pupils to derive huge benefit from the entire curriculum. Children

start to learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff have the expertise to teach the well-sequenced phonics programme effectively. They are adept at identifying pupils who fall behind. Staff give these pupils extra support and practice to help them catch up with their classmates.

Staff use many strategies to promote pupils' love of reading. These include reading a range of authors and genres to pupils every day. Staff encourage pupils to read at home with books that match their pupils' phonics knowledge. They work closely with families to ensure that all pupils have resources at home to further promote their interest and enjoyment in reading. Pupils quickly become fluent readers. They expand their vocabulary and gain new knowledge across a range of subjects.

In all subjects, staff plan well-sequenced lessons from the early years onwards. Through regular training and mutual support, staff gain expertise across the subjects. They use their expertise to make sure that pupils build on their prior knowledge. Pupils learn to make connections between different subjects. Children in the early years thrive in the vibrant, caring and nurturing setting. Early years staff work in collaboration with subject leaders and key stage 1 colleagues in planning the curriculum. Children gain knowledge across all areas of learning, preparing them effectively for entry into Year 1.

Pupils achieve highly across the curriculum. Music, for example, has a high profile in the school. Staff build pupils' musical knowledge and skills from the early years onwards. Step by step pupils become better singers. They learn to play musical instruments and compose good-quality music. This is because leaders ensure that pupils have considerable time to practise and master their proficiency in the particular instruments they play. The choirs and brass bands play at local music events. Once a week, parents bringing their children to school stay behind to listen to one of the school's brass bands playing in the playground. This practice started at pupils' initiative.

Leaders have well-established processes to identify the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff, parents and therapists collaborate to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need to learn as well as their peers.

Pupils are curious and very keen to learn. They behave impeccably in lessons. These attitudes help them to succeed extremely well.

The school has a high-quality programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to debate topical issues. They get involved in national charity events. Recently, pupils took part in a fun run to raise funds for the school to buy more reading books. Pupils' learning is enriched by visits to many of London's museums and other places of cultural interest. They attend workshops on crime and citizenship. Their experiences are augmented by visitors such as authors, Shakespearian theatre companies and scientists. Many pupils take part in extra instrumental coaching from specialist music teachers.

Staff morale is high. Staff say that leaders are concerned with their welfare and never ask them to do unnecessary work.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. There is a strong culture of 'anything could happen here'. Staff are well attuned to noticing changes in pupils' behaviours. They report all concerns, and leaders keep detailed records of their subsequent actions.

Leaders have strong links with external agencies to support pupils' safety and well-being. When appropriate, leaders make referrals in a timely fashion.

Leaders vet new staff applicants carefully to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn about risk and how to avoid danger, including how to form healthy relationships.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 some 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 outstanding in January 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100025
<b>Local authority</b>	Camden
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199513
<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>	459
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Marcus Goddard
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Hayes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gospeloak.camden.sch.uk">www.gospeloak.camden.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 – 28 January 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been no relevant changes since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. He spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority. The inspector met virtually with the chair of the governing body, as well as four other governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, music 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. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- The inspector reviewed the school's policies and records and spoke with the designated safeguarding leader, senior leaders, governors, pupils, staff and parents to check on the school's culture of safeguarding.
- The inspector had formal meetings with staff and pupils and spoke with parents informally in the playground. The inspector took account of the 124 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, which included many written comments. The inspector also considered the 35 responses to the staff survey and 194 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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