

Inspection of an outstanding school: Paddock School

Priory Lane, London SW15 5RT

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

Paddock School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Paddock School. They enjoy their learning and are very proud of what they achieve. Pupils value the close working relationships they have with all staff. Parents and carers appreciate the care given by the staff team.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. They understand pupils' complex needs exceptionally well and cater for each pupil individually. Staff are well trained to help pupils to develop their communication skills. This is a key part of leaders' vision for preparing pupils for life beyond Paddock.

Pupils are safe and behave very well. They respond to the routines and clear directions that are in place. Staff communicate their expectations clearly to individual pupils. They use a range of verbal and non-verbal ways to communicate with pupils. Pupils respond well to the personal approach. Staff deal effectively with any rare incidents of bullying.

Pupils becoming independent underpins everything teachers plan to do. Pupils enjoy learning outside of the classroom. They particularly value their swimming lessons and develop strong skills. Staff show great care for pupils and encourage them to be confident and believe that they can achieve highly. They support pupils exceptionally well to develop independence.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. The aim is for each pupil to leave the school prepared to succeed in adult life. The curriculum matches the individual needs of each pupil. Teachers plan curriculum content to encourage pupils to develop ways of communicating. For example, pupils build their independence and their communication skills when they ask for different snacks. Pupils are proud of what they can do and enjoy this work.

Across the curriculum, there is a strong focus on communication. Teachers and therapists plan precise steps for every pupil to develop skills that they will need for life. Pupils learn how to communicate their feelings and emotions and how to regulate their behaviour. Teachers also plan plentiful opportunities for pupils to communicate with each other. Pupils use visual communication systems and electronic devices readily to help learning. This builds over time. Staff's consistent approach leads to pupils developing their communication skills exceptionally well.

Leaders and teachers are determined that every pupil will be a reader. All pupils join in with enthusiasm in different reading activities. The reading curriculum is both ambitious and individualised for each pupil. It is taught through the broader curriculum, which focuses on communication, thinking, independence and well-being. Staff read regularly to pupils and carefully select books to read to them. Some pupils learn to read through a well-structured phonics programme. All pupils develop their reading skills very well. They enjoy applying their knowledge and reading for a purpose. For example, some pupils across the school use visual communication systems to understand requests from staff.

Teachers are skilled and knowledgeable. They help pupils to learn successfully. For example, in mathematics, teachers plan personalised tasks for pupils. They help pupils to understand key concepts such as money. The carefully planned curriculum also enables pupils to make links between what they are learning and the wider world. For instance, pupils grow their own vegetables and fruit on the school's allotment. They then use the produce that they grow in their school café, which is open to the public. Pupils enjoy and learn a lot from these experiences. In the sixth form, students value opportunities to work in the café and handle money. Planned experiences using public transport for selected students help to promote their independence. Sixth-form students are well prepared for their next stage of education or employment.

The curriculum is equally well planned in other subjects. For instance, in physical education (PE), pupils build up their physical skills over time. Repeated actions and drills help pupils to know and remember particular skills. This helps pupils to achieve well. Through activities such as yoga, football, throwing and catching, pupils develop the ability to work as a team and show respect to each other. Staff and pupils work together extremely well in all lessons. Pupils watch and listen carefully to demonstrations. In PE, for example, they follow basic rules with the support of signs for walk, run and stop. Pupils are very well behaved in all lessons.

Pupils learn about sharing their feeling and emotions through the school's relationships and sex education curriculum. Students in the sixth form understand that people have special times together and can share love and happiness. Leaders work closely with families to share topics taught in the relationships, sex and health education curriculum so that parents can support their children's learning. Teachers work hard to actively support pupils' mental health. For example, each pupil has their own individual 'Happiness Box', where they place objects that they love. Across the school, staff use consistent approaches to help pupils to understand feelings such as anger, happiness and sadness.

Being an inclusive school runs through the heart of leadership and management. Staff feel supported and valued as a team. They enjoy working at the school. Staff appreciate the different well-being activities that leaders provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors have regular safeguarding training. This leads to a consistent approach to promoting pupils' well-being and safety.

Staff make sure that pupils are well cared for. Staff identify any concerns and risks promptly. They are aware that, for many pupils, communicating a concern is difficult. Staff look for and are alert to other signs that may indicate pupils' welfare is at risk. They ensure that pupils are provided with extra help in a timely way.

Staff feel they can always talk to leaders if they have a concern. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to keep children safe.

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 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 September 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

Unique reference number	101102
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10200101
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Asquith and Tim Pethybridge (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Sarah Santos
Website	www.paddock.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is an all-through special school which caters for pupils with severe and complex needs. Every pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school. They met with the co-chairs of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a senior adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, language and communication, mathematics, PE and personal, social, health and economic education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visited lessons with senior leaders, looked at samples of pupils' work and met with teachers. Inspectors also met with pupils to understand their views on the school.
- Inspectors considered the well-being and behaviour of pupils through a range of activities. These included visits to lessons, the dining hall and other lunchtime activities.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding through discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. They looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their workload and well-being. They considered the staff responses to the Ofsted survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation provided by leaders. This included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.

Inspection team

Janice Howkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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