

Inspection of St James Church of England Primary School

Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N10 3JA

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at the school. They typically behave well in their classrooms, when moving around the school and outside in the playground. Pupils know that bullying occasionally happens and are confident that adults are around to listen and help them. Staff deal with any concerns swiftly. The school's new leaders are approachable and visible throughout the school day.

Leaders and staff get to know every child. They expect and encourage pupils to work hard. They have designed an ambitious curriculum that helps pupils develop their understanding across and within the subjects taught. This is a school where pupils routinely achieve well.

Pupils enjoy learning, including visits and workshops that take place inside the school and in the local area. They support the local food bank and raise money for local charities. They are proud to take on roles representing their class or school, as house captains, science technicians, rights-respecting leaders or school councillors and in extra-curricular clubs.

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

Governors and the new leadership team have high expectations for all pupils. They have made sure that curriculum leaders identify what pupils need to know to be successful in the future. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to read confidently and fluently. They have invested heavily in staff's training and resources to support the teaching of reading. Leaders have prioritised the purchase of class books which reflect the rich, cultural diversity of modern Britain.

The teaching of early reading is a particular strength of the school. Staff who teach early reading are confident and knowledgeable in teaching phonics. Books for children at the early stages of learning to read match the sounds children know. Workshops help parents and carers to understand the importance of this close match to support early reading. Staff quickly identify and help any pupils who have fallen behind, including new arrivals in Years 3 to 6, so that they catch up and keep up. Developing a love of reading is prioritised by leaders and teachers. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books they read and the books that staff read to them.

Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. Leaders have identified the important concepts and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn in each subject. These are well sequenced from the early years to Year 6, so pupils return to, practise and apply their knowledge over time. For example, mathematics and science successfully show leaders' strong curricular thinking. However, in some areas, leaders have not focused as sharply on what the youngest children need to know and remember over time. This means that on occasions, activities in the early years do not deepen children's understanding as well as they could.

Teachers encourage pupils to think about what they have learned in each lesson. Assessments help teachers to identify where pupils may not have grasped key parts of subject content and plan the next steps in their learning.

Staff support the small proportion of pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) well. They help pupils with SEND to be successful and keep up with their peers by providing additional, practical resources. Staff help pupils with SEND to grasp what they need to understand before moving on to new ideas.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They typically listen carefully in class and work hard. Occasionally, pupils fall out, but staff and teachers help them learn how to be calm.

New leaders and governors make sure pupils' personal development is encouraged strongly. Older pupils spoke with confidence about respecting diversity and the many heritages that make up British society. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively encouraged throughout the schools' curriculum. There is much to promote pupils' artistic and cultural skills. Leaders make sure opportunities to attend after-school clubs, including art, French, fencing and gardening, are open to all.

The governing body visits the school regularly. It knows what is working well and what needs to improve. Staff, including teachers at the beginning of their career, appreciated leaders' approachability and support. They felt trusted and valued by the new leaders at the school. They said that their workload is well managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Through up-to-date training, leaders make sure staff are vigilant about pupils' well-being. Staff know how and when to report any concerns they may have. Records show that leaders take prompt action when concerns are raised. Written records are suitably detailed. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. For example, external organisations with expertise in working with children lead workshops and assemblies for pupils on staying safe. Pupils are taught about healthy, trusting relationships and consent. They are taught about possible risks to their safety and how to report their concerns and encouraged to stay safe, for example when using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, in some areas, the focus on what children need to know and remember over time is not identified as sharply as in the rest of the school. This means that planning is not routinely as helpful as it could be to support all staff in the early years. Leaders should ensure that what children need to know and remember to be ready for the start of Year 1 is clearly identified in all subjects.

This will help adults supporting across the early years to ensure indoor and outdoor learning opportunities deepen children's knowledge and understanding further.

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	102136
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10211813
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Larkin Morton and Louise Posocco (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Geraldine Gallagher (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.stjamesprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Following the departure of the headteacher at the end of the summer term 2021, the governing body entered into a two-year agreement with another local school to secure part-time leadership capacity. An experienced executive headteacher, known to the diocese and local authority, works at the school for half the working week.
- Governors have also seconded the services, initially for one year, of an experienced deputy headteacher from another school. This is providing the school with a head of school for the current academic year.
- This is a Church of England school within the Diocese of London. Its denominational education and collective worship are inspected separately under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in December 2017.
- The school's next section 48 inspection is due by December 2025. Section 48 inspections usually take place every three to five years but have been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. These inspections restarted in September 2021

and the school's first section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last, rather than the usual three to five years interval.

- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher and the head of school. Meetings were held with eight governors, including the co-chairs of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with representatives from the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. These included: art and design, music and personal, social and health education.
- In considering the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding children. They held discussions with a range of pupils, staff and leaders. Inspectors visited the playground during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered records of the training staff receive relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, including those responsible for behaviour and attendance at the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day to gain their views of the school. They reviewed responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and additional free-text comments.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of staff and pupils, as gathered through discussions on site and responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector
Jasper Green	Her Majesty's Inspector

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