

Inspection of Sir William Burrough Primary School

Salmon Lane, Limehouse, London E14 7PQ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sir William Burrough Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very happy school where pupils and staff feel at home. From when children arrive in the early years, they build strong working relationships with staff. Pupils feel safe, as staff care for them well. Leaders have created a community ethos in which people value each other. Pupils learn to celebrate differences and behave extremely well. Occasional disagreements, including potential bullying, are nipped in the bud. Staff facilitate the quick restoration of friendships.

Leaders have high expectations, especially for pupils' behaviour and personal development. The promotion of pupils' spoken language also has a high profile. Pupils often debate contentious issues in school and enter local and national debating competitions.

Leaders make sure that pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics. However, pupils' achievements in some other subjects are not as strong. This is because leaders do not ensure that pupils learn and remember key knowledge across the subjects.

Pupils who arrive at the very early stages of speaking English as an additional language are given intensive help to develop their spoken language skills. Fellow pupils go out of their way to befriend them. This enables pupils to quickly mix in and benefit from everything on offer at the school.

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

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. From the early years up, knowledgeable staff teach children to read using an agreed phonics programme. Staff identify any pupils who fall behind. The support these pupils need to catch up is mostly effective. Across the school, teachers give pupils many opportunities to read. They do so both for pleasure and for finding out new information. As a result, pupils become fluent and confident readers and build up a strong vocabulary.

The English and mathematics curriculum is designed with a logical progression. It ensures that step by step pupils build up and deepen their knowledge. Pupils are supported to apply their knowledge and skills in different situations. The curriculum is working well in practice, right from the start in the early years. Teachers check pupils' knowledge often. They use the information to adapt their teaching and address any misconceptions. As a result, pupils achieve well in these subjects.

The rest of the curriculum covers a range of subjects and is delivered through general topics or themes. Leaders have not thought about how they can ensure that pupils build up, gain and retain key subject-specific knowledge for most of these other subjects. Leaders have not made sure that staff have secure subject knowledge in all the subjects they teach. Leaders also give teachers some autonomy to choose what content they teach within a topic or subject. This leads to inconsistencies in what pupils learn over time.

In some instances, teachers stray into covering too many ideas within a subject in one go. At times, pupils become overwhelmed by lots of information which digresses from the specific subject knowledge that teachers want pupils to know. This tends to leave pupils confused. They tend to remember fun activities, rather than knowledge. For example, when learning about rainforests, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the canopy they had constructed, as well as their artwork inspired by the rainforests. However, they struggled to recall any geographical or scientific aspects of knowledge related to rainforests. Teachers do not routinely plan activities to help pupils remember, long term, key subject knowledge. This holds pupils back from achieving highly in these subjects.

The curriculum for the early years is well thought through and delivered. This contributes well to children developing secure knowledge across all areas of learning. They leave Reception well prepared for entry to Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the help that they need. Their needs are identified accurately, and they are supported in class to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Children in the early years behave well. They engage in the many activities available with enthusiasm and curiosity. They share and play sensibly with each other. Pupils display very positive attitudes in class. They are diligent, value learning and want to succeed.

Singing, dancing and assemblies on a wide range of topics are strong features of daily life at school. Staff encourage pupils to develop strong character traits. These include kindness and persistence. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to the wider community. For example, some go down the local river in canoes to pick out litter. Leaders have started to reintroduce the wide range of clubs and educational visits that were put on hold during the pandemic.

Staff's morale and retention are exceptionally high. Leaders are considerate of staff's welfare. Staff appreciate the changes that leaders have made to reduce unnecessary paperwork.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff, most of whom have worked at the school for many years, know the pupils and their families well. They are alert to any concerning signs and changes in behaviours. They report concerns, even if they appear minor, to the safeguarding leaders. Leaders work and liaise effectively with external agencies to support pupils' safety and welfare.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about risk and how to stay safe. This includes when using the internet and how to form healthy and avoid potentially harmful relationships.

Leaders follow the proper procedures for vetting candidates' suitability to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified exactly what they want pupils to know and remember long term in all of the foundation subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain and remember deep knowledge across some subjects. Leaders should make sure that they identify and make clear to staff exactly what subject-specific knowledge they want pupils to know and by when.
- In the foundation subjects, teachers do not routinely focus enough on what subject-specific knowledge they want pupils to know. Sometimes, teaching diverges from the knowledge that pupils need to learn. This can leave pupils confused. This is partly down to staff not being provided with suitable guidance and training to develop their subject-specific and subject-teaching knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise and skills to teach each subject with clarity and precision.
- Teachers, when teaching foundation subjects, do not focus on ensuring that pupils recall and remember what they have been taught. This means that in the long term, pupils forget some of their prior learning. Teachers should ensure that the delivery of the curriculum enables pupils to embed knowledge in their long-term memories.
- There is no leadership oversight of how knowledge in some foundation subjects should build up from the early years to Year 6. There is an over-reliance on the skills and expertise of individual teachers, and this leads to inconsistencies in what pupils are taught. Leaders need to ensure and assure the quality of the curriculum.

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.

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	137682
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10228605
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dennis Twomey
Headteacher	Avril Newman
Website	www.sirwilliamburrough.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sir William Burrough Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2011. When its predecessor school, Sir William Burrough Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- Staff and governance retention are high.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and

teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the chair of governors and one other governor. They also spoke with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They took account of the responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Stumpf	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Turvey	His Majesty's Inspector
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