

# Inspection of an outstanding school: John F Kennedy Special School

Pitchford Street, Stratford, London E15 4RZ

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Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

## **Outcome**

John F Kennedy Special School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

John F Kennedy Special School is a school where pupils feel happy and are safe. Pupils join the school at different ages. They are supported to settle quickly, even when they have been out of school for some time. Leaders ensure that the school provides for the different needs and ages of the pupils who attend each site. Staff prepare pupils very well for their next stage of education.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement. They know the pupils extremely well. Pupils show a high level of trust in the adults they work with. Communication is a key focus for all pupils in the school. Staff use every possible moment to promote communication and interaction.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well on all sites. Leaders ensure that staff are well prepared to support and resolve any behaviour concerns, including if there were any rare instances of bullying. Occasionally, a pupil needs a break from class and their learning is interrupted. Leaders have developed a wide range of strategies to support pupils to de-escalate and return to their learning as quickly as possible.

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

Leaders have put a broad curriculum in place with clear learning pathways for each pupil. Curriculum leaders meet regularly with class teachers to discuss what they have taught and what should be taught next, based on the school's curriculum. This results in very fine-tuned personalised opportunities and consistent delivery of the learning pathways across the school sites. Senior leaders attend each of the sites regularly to support curriculum delivery.

Learning activities are well sequenced. This means that pupils build up their knowledge piece by piece in small steps, linking each new piece of knowledge to what they already know. Leaders set personalised goals that link to each pupil's education, health and care plan. Teachers and support staff regularly check on pupils' learning and development.

Staff adjust their teaching when pupils need more support, and to ensure they do not fall behind if they miss any learning.

Reading is systematically taught through phonics. Pupils learn to read words they will come across regularly. Pupils read books that are matched to their phonic skills to help them practise the sounds they are learning. They also read books for pleasure. Pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality texts that encourage them to read about areas of interest and support their learning. Leaders promote pupils' reading through the development of an online programme for reading non-fiction material.

Curriculum activities extend beyond academic subjects. For example, pupils really enjoyed and extended their learning through clay work delivered by external providers. They benefited from the sensory experience and sense of control over the clay. Older pupils look forward to animation sessions. This work is linked to possibilities for study when pupils leave school.

Secondary and sixth-form pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Most proceed to further education, and leaders have designed the school curriculum to maximise opportunities to prepare for this experience. This learning is tailored to the needs of each individual. Pupils who may be able to live independently or semi-independently are taught the skills they will need in preparation for this.

Key areas of personal development are taught throughout the day on all sites. Pupils find out about others that are different from themselves. Pupils are supported to work alongside and engage appropriately with their peers, as much as is possible. Leaders ensure that pupils develop independence skills and are prepared for their next steps when they leave school.

Lessons are very rarely disrupted by low-level disruption. Pupils are engaged in their learning. Leaders have thorough systems in place for the reporting and addressing any behaviours of concern.

The school is well led and managed. Staff feel supported by leaders. Governors know the school well. Governors and leaders regularly check on staff workload. They support staff if any concerns are raised. Changes are made, where possible, when concerns are raised. Staff report that the school is a 'happy place'. Leaders provide coaching for key staff. This makes sure that staff are able to discuss their work with leaders and thus ensures consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. Leaders also arrange for staff to work with other schools to learn from each other. This deepens staff's subject knowledge.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders follow appropriate procedures for recruitment and managing any concerns raised to make sure pupils are safe at school.

Leaders have strong and consistent systems in place to safeguard pupils across all sites. Staff are provided with regular training and know how to report concerns. Some pupils know who to go to if they have a concern. For other pupils who may not be able to

explain their worries, staff are alert to any small changes in behaviour.

Leaders work with other agencies to make sure pupils and their families receive support when they need it. They follow up referrals when necessary.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe as part of the curriculum. Staff, parents and governors are confident that pupils are safe at school.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2017.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141255
<b>Local authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228391
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ben Spinks
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Robinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.jfkspecialschool.lihtrust.uk/">https://www.jfkspecialschool.lihtrust.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 to 4 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has expanded and moved into some new premises since the last inspection.
- The school has four sites, one catering for pupils with complex learning, physical and medical needs, one for younger pupils with autism spectrum disorder, one for older pupils with autism spectrum disorder and one for pupils who are developing independence in preparation for their life after school. These sites are in Stratford, North Woolwich, Beckton and Plaistow respectively.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are very few pupils under the age of seven attending the school.
- Pupils have different learning experiences on each of the sites according to their specific needs. One curriculum pathway focuses on early learning activities and engagement. The other is delivered through subjects. Some pupils' learning falls between these two pathways.

- The school does not use any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders and governors of the school and spoke to the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education, and physical education. 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 considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in order to inspect safeguarding practice. They held a discussion with the leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and looked at the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and reviewed the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Penny Barratt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Gaynor Roberts	His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector

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