

# Inspection of Duncombe Primary School

Sussex Way, Islington, London N19 4JA

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

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

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

Pupils at Duncombe Primary School are polite, friendly and inquisitive. They respect each other and enjoy learning and playing together. This is a diverse and inclusive school. There is a true spirit of community here. Pupils are safe at school. They know staff care about them and their families.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They want to give pupils the best start in life. Pupils respond well to these expectations. They grow in resilience and independence. They work hard in lessons and show an interest in their studies. They achieve well and move on to secondary school ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave very well. Leaders have established a clear set of routines that pupils follow. This is a calm and orderly school. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Bullying is quite rare. When it does happen, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils grow in confidence and aspiration here. They gain new experiences through trips and visits to places such as the Ecology Centre, the Barbican theatre and the Tower of London. Year 6 pupils visit Cambridge University. Pupils help with the school's foodbank and take on leadership roles in the school council.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn and have sequenced this well. Pupils build up their knowledge and skills in increasing depth and complexity as they move through the school. In the early years, children experience a rich and stimulating learning environment. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources to help children's physical development. They also focus on developing children's language and communication, and mathematical knowledge. They provide children with the foundations of learning. This prepares children for Year 1 and beyond. As pupils move up the school, they learn how to work like subject specialists, such as historians and mathematicians.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They identify pupils' needs with speed and accuracy. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt their teaching well to meet the needs of pupils, including pupils with SEND. Teachers present new information with clarity. They check pupils' understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning. Leaders have designed the curriculum so that pupils revisit what they have learned before. This helps pupils to secure their knowledge and understanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They learn without disruption. Pupils achieve well, including pupils with SEND.

Leaders prioritise reading. They know how vital it is to pupils' educational success. Pupils learn to read using phonics from the start of Reception. Leaders check pupils' progress in reading at regular intervals. They give extra help to pupils who need it. Many pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident and fluent readers. However, the quality of phonics teaching and tuition is inconsistent. Occasionally, adults do not identify pupils' misconceptions. This slows down some pupils' progress. Leaders also prioritise a love for reading. They choose class texts which reflect pupils' diversity. Pupils read for pleasure often, both at school and at home.

An exceptional programme of personal development enriches pupils' experience at school. It also prepares them well for life. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They learn about equality and diversity and celebrate the different cultures and faiths in their community. Pupils undertake charity work and support each other's well-being. They learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils take part in a borough initiative that promotes visits to places of cultural interest in London. There are also trips and visits linked to the curriculum. These deepen pupils' understanding of the subjects they are studying.

Leaders have established a clear set of values. Pupils and staff share these values. Also, leaders work with intelligence to build positive relationships with parents and carers. Leaders care deeply about the community they serve. They give pupils a high-quality education that prepares pupils well for study at secondary school. Governors share leaders' high aspirations for pupils. They carry out their responsibilities well. They offer leaders support and challenge to ensure that pupils get the best possible education. Staff respond well to leaders' ambitions for pupils. They know the importance of their role in helping to give pupils a great education. Leaders listen to staff. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff value this. They enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They are knowledgeable about national and local safeguarding risks. Leaders provide staff with regular training and updates. Staff fulfil their responsibilities. They are alert to any signs of concern in pupils. They report concerns about pupils swiftly and appropriately. Leaders act quickly to help pupils. They have developed in-school counselling and mental health provision. They also work well with external agencies to secure the help pupils need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders work with parents to raise parental awareness of potential risks to their children.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some adults do not consistently identify gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and understanding accurately. This includes adults providing one-to-one tuition for pupils who need extra help with decoding words and reading fluency. This means that a few pupils in Reception and key stage 1 do not learn to read fluently as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that all phonics teachers become expert in the teaching of phonics so that pupils at an early stage of reading make swift progress in learning to read with fluency.

## 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>	100403
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255366
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Peter Bacon Darwin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Ryan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.duncombeprimary.co.uk">www.duncombeprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider.

## 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 met with the headteacher, other school leaders, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 met with the subject leader for English and carried out lesson visits in English. They also considered the curriculum in the early years, and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and deputy. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils in relation to behaviour and attitudes, and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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