

# Inspection of a good school: St Mark's Church of England Primary Academy

Albert Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4JD

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

## **Outcome**

St Mark's Church of England Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly school. They are safe here because staff understand them and care for them. Leaders expect pupils to work hard and achieve well, and pupils live up to these expectations.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of experiences that leaders provide. This includes special events, such as the careers day, where pupils each came to school dressed as a worker in the career they wish to pursue. Leaders also run regular clubs, including football, dance and choir. Pupils celebrate a range of cultures through experiencing different foods, music and clothing.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are considerate and respectful. From the early years, pupils learn to be kind and to take turns. Bullying is not commonplace and is dealt with effectively if it does occur.

Parents and carers are involved in the life of the school. They are invited to attend workshops and events so they can support their child's learning at home.

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

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. Staff read to pupils each day, generating a sense of anticipation and excitement as the story develops. Alongside special events and regular workshops for parents, this promotes a love of reading. Pupils start to learn phonics from the beginning of Reception. They are provided with books that match the sounds they know, and learn to read with increasing fluency. Any pupils who start to fall behind are identified quickly and given the support they need to catch up with their classmates.

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Subjects are appropriately sequenced so that pupils' knowledge builds up across each unit of work, and from year to year. Teachers make sure that they deliver the curriculum as leaders have set it out.

Leaders have thought carefully about how children's learning in the early years links to what they will learn in Year 1. Teachers throughout the school have strong subject knowledge and present ideas clearly. They explain new vocabulary, such as 'tundra' and 'bioluminescence' in science, in ways that help pupils to remember and use these words accurately. Sometimes, however, teachers do not routinely check that pupils have correctly recalled what they have been taught before introducing more complex ideas. When this happens, pupils' progress through the curriculum is hampered and the more complex concepts do not stick in pupils' long-term memory.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly and accurately. Teachers adapt their approach in lessons so that these pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND receive the support outlined in their individual plans.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare. If it does occur, staff deal with it calmly and consistently, so that pupils quickly return to their work. Leaders provide additional support to pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is promoted through the curriculum and through wider opportunities. Pupils are taught about topics such as healthy relationships, drugs awareness and how to stay physically and mentally well. For example, during a recent 'mental health day', they experienced yoga and were taught how to pamper themselves. Pupils are also introduced to aspects of British society such as democracy, parliament and the 'first past the post' voting system.

Leaders plan trips and visits carefully, making sure that the experience will enhance the curriculum and/or pupils' development. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 visited an outdoor adventure centre where they participated in activities together. Leaders have noticed that since this visit, pupils of different ages play together more collaboratively in the school playground.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Leaders engage with staff regularly and support their well-being. Staff are appreciative of actions taken by leaders to reduce their workload. The governing body knows the school well and takes its responsibilities seriously.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training. This keeps them up to date with changes to guidance but also makes sure they are aware of the contextual risks that may be faced by pupils in this school. Staff are alert to any signs that may indicate that pupils are at risk. They report any concerns to leaders who take

swift action to seek advice and support from external agencies when needed. Leaders provide therapy and counselling to pupils who need this support.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online and when out in the local community.

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

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

- Sometimes, teaching does not routinely check what pupils know and remember before moving on to more difficult concepts. When this happens, pupils' progression through the curriculum can be limited. Leaders should ensure that teachers check what pupils know before introducing more complex ideas.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in June 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>	141119
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240328
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gavin Robert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Taiwo Labinjo
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarkscofeprimaryacademy.net">www.stmarkscofeprimaryacademy.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a Christian ethos. It is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Southwark. The school's last section 48 inspection was in January 2017.
- The school is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust.
- There are no pupils placed in alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers. He also met with some members of the local governing body and a trustee.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held meetings with leaders about behaviour and pupils' development. He observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. He held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the arrangements for safeguarding. He reviewed safeguarding records and documentation. This included the record of pre-employment checks made on staff suitability.
- The inspector considered responses to online surveys gathering the views of parents, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Gary Phillips, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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