

# Inspection of John Scurr Primary School

Cephas Street, Stepney Green, London E1 4AX

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils and their future career possibilities. They guide pupils to be respectful, resilient, resourceful, reflective and ready to learn. Pupils demonstrated these values in the way that they behaved, and the pride with which they spoke about their school.

Leaders have established a positive place for learning here. Teachers embed strong routines that pupils know well and follow. This ensures that no learning time is wasted and supports teachers to deliver an ambitious and well-designed school curriculum. Pupils are polite and considerate. They are safe here. They can speak to a trusted adult if they wish to. Leaders and teachers address and resolve any incidences of behaviour that do not meet their high standards.

Leaders arrange a wide variety of outings and extra-curricular activities for pupils, both inside and outside of the school. For example, staff have created a forest school and edible garden where pupils are taught to grow and harvest herbs and vegetables. Some pupils play competitive chess. Leaders organise a variety of clubs to develop pupils' interests and which change each term. All pupils are taught to debate sensitive and important issues. Some pupils represent the school in local and national debating competitions. Many pupils run a mile each day between classes to support their fitness, physical and mental health.

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

Leaders have recently introduced new curriculum thinking across many subjects. The subject curriculums detail the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know, and the order in which pupils need to learn it. In some subjects, this work has taken place over a sustained period and the impact is evident in the quality of pupils' academic achievement. Leaders of subjects in these areas know how the curriculum builds pupils' knowledge over time. This clarity provides teachers with the information that they need to teach the curriculum effectively.

For example, in history in Year 1, pupils learn about their local community and how it has changed within living memory. In Year 2, they explore the difference between the community now, and the London community at the time of the Great Fire of London. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are taught about the stone age and Anglo-Saxon farming communities. They then study the ancient Greek and Mayan civilisations in Years 5 and 6.

However, in a small number of subjects, where new curriculum improvements may be recent, the curriculum is not as equally strongly embedded. It is not as clear how different areas within the curriculum connect to build pupils' knowledge over time.

Leaders ensure that children from age two upwards are well cared for and engage in purposeful learning throughout the day. In the early years, leaders have thought

carefully about children's vocabulary development. This is reflected in the books that leaders have chosen to support children's language development. However, leaders have not ensured that children learn key knowledge and skills throughout their time in Nursery and Reception. Leaders have identified this and have plans in place to address this.

Leaders have recently implemented a new and improved phonics programme for pupils in Reception to Year 3. Well-trained staff consistently deliver this programme and make sure that pupils have the knowledge required to become fluent readers. Pupils regularly practise reading books that match to their current reading level. Leaders ensure that through assessment checks, teachers identify pupils who need help to catch up. Teachers provide these pupils with the support that they need to improve their reading. Leaders have also established a culture of reading for pleasure among pupils in older years.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils that may require additional support are identified rapidly. Leaders have created a class where some pupils with SEND receive specialist teaching. This is to help pupils with SEND to learn as effectively as possible.

Pupils behave maturely and sensibly in class and during breaktimes. Leaders have high expectations of pupils that are commonly understood by all. They are working to sharpen procedures to improve pupils' attendance. They have recently updated the school's attendance policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders have crafted an extensive personal development curriculum. For example, all pupils have the opportunity to sing, to learn to play instruments and to perform in events outside of school. The pupil-voice committee contributes to decision-making in school on topics including health and the environment. Pupils also fundraise for local and national charities.

The governing body has an accurate view of leaders' performance. This is because they have the appropriate expertise to hold leaders to account. They also seek the views of teachers, and parents and carers regularly. Staff are complimentary about school leaders. Staff said that leaders have worked successfully to reduce workload in recent years, and that the staff's well-being is treated as a priority. Leaders also make a concerted effort to engage with all parents in the community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff report any concerns that they may have, however small. Leaders have clear systems to report potential concerns, which all staff follow. Leaders are also aware of the local risks that pupils may face. Leaders work closely with external partners to ensure that those who may need help get it quickly. Pupils are taught to keep themselves

safe online. Leaders also provide guidance and support for parents to help them to keep their children safe online at home.

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

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

- Leaders have not made sure that children learn key knowledge across all learning areas in the early years as clearly as in other phases. This means that children do not systematically build the knowledge and skills that they need in all learning areas in preparation for key stage 1. Leaders should follow through with their plans to ensure that children learn all necessary knowledge and skills required throughout the early years.

## **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 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>	100906
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255397
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	469
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kevin Hinde
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Lewington
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk">www.johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision providers.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

## 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 held meetings with the governing body, headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, personal, social and health education, behaviour, early reading and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, geography, early reading, music and science.

- 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.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. Inspectors looked at documentation related to safeguarding, including the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Guy Forbat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Glossop	His Majesty's Inspector
Samantha Ingram	His Majesty's Inspector

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