

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Ann's School

Springfield Road, Hanwell, London W7 3JP

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

St Ann's School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St Ann's School. They feel happy and safe. Pupils attending the school have complex needs. Some pupils have physical disabilities, others have difficulties with learning. Leaders organise pupils into classes where they will learn best. In all classes there are high expectations for every pupil, which helps pupils to achieve very well.

There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils. Behaviour is well managed. Behaviour is seen as a form of communication and staff respond accordingly. Leaders ensure that staff at all levels receive appropriate training. As a result, adults respond to pupils with a high degree of consistency.

Communication is a key focus. All forms of communication are used and valued. These include signs, visual symbols, photographs, gestures, sounds and language. Approaches are systematically developed for each pupil. Staff decide together how they will communicate with each individual. They also decide how they will encourage pupils to communicate their needs and wishes. This ensures that every opportunity for communication is taken.

Parents and carers contribute to pupils' targets. Lessons take place in the community as well as in school. Parents frequently support these lessons. These include using public transport and visiting shops. This learning helps parents to be confident when taking their child out when they are not at school.

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

Leaders have ensured that the school provides a high-quality education. This is delivered through a well-designed and well-sequenced curriculum. The function of the curriculum is to encourage pupils to build on previous learning and enable them to access learning and social experiences while at school and after leaving school. Pupils are supported

extremely well by both teachers and support staff, who receive a wide range of training to support them in their roles.

Leaders make sure the curriculum is relevant for all pupils and builds on their different starting points. Staff ensure that the teaching is adapted to suit the needs of each individual pupil.

Much of the curriculum focuses on life skills. Pupils learn to tolerate working with others and develop their social skills. For some pupils, this means working with one other person. For others, it involves working collaboratively in groups.

Pupils' learning targets are linked to their education, health and care (EHC) plans. These targets are planned with therapists and other agencies and discussed with parents. The targets are available to all staff so that they remain at the forefront of adults' minds as they work with pupils. All staff provide feedback on how well pupils are progressing towards their individual targets and pupils achieve well. This feedback contributes to termly reports and assessments, providing a clear record of progress.

Leaders have embedded a focus on literacy activities which includes reading symbols, sensory stories, call and response, and interactive poetry, supported by a poet-in-residence. All pupils access these lessons and develop their pre-reading skills.

Any disruption to lessons is skilfully dealt with so that pupils are re-engaged in their learning as quickly as possible. Over time, many pupils learn strategies to help them to manage their own behaviour.

Leaders plan a wide range of activities for learning outside of school. This includes family events such as 'Colourscape' (a weekend fun workshop held on the school premises), visits to libraries and museums, and experience of public transport. Many of these activities are planned with parents so that they are also effectively supported. For example, some parents asked leaders for support in getting their child's hair cut. In response, leaders developed links with a local barber shop. Initially, work takes place in school to introduce pupils to the use of scissors and other equipment. This activity is extended until the pupil can tolerate having a haircut in school. Finally, staff organise a trip out of school, to the barbers, for a haircut.

Pupils learn about the world of work through employers visiting the school. They bring materials from their work and share these with pupils. Some pupils then visit the workplace to further extend their understanding.

The school is well led and managed. Staff feel supported by leaders and are proud to work at this school. Governors contribute positively to the work of the school and explain that everyone works well together as a team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide training for staff so that any concerns about pupil welfare are quickly reported and addressed. Those with responsibility for safeguarding, including the school's social worker, ensure that they refer to other agencies to gain the appropriate help for pupils and their families. They follow up with these agencies if they do not receive a satisfactory response.

Appropriate checks are in place for the recruitment of staff and records are systematically maintained.

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 November 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

Unique reference number	101971
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10255543
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Arthur Batalona
Headteacher	Timothy Holdsworth
Website	www.stannsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school educates pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and/or significant complex medical conditions.
- All pupils have EHC plans.
- 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 the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and the local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into communication and literacy, personal, social and health education including life skills, and physical education.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff and looked at records of pupils' work. Other subject areas were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors met with teachers and support staff to discuss their views on pupil behaviour, safeguarding and the training they receive.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the staff questionnaire and to Ofsted's Parent View.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records and records of checks undertaken on staff working at the school. She met with the school's educational social worker and designated safeguarding lead to discuss actions the school takes when safeguarding concerns are expressed.

Inspection team

Penny Barratt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

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