

Inspection of a good school: St James's Hatcham Church of England Primary School

St James's, New Cross, London SE14 6AD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

St James's Hatcham Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. They feel safe in this warm and friendly school, where any differences are welcomed and celebrated. Pupils are confident that if they have any concerns, there will be an adult to talk to. Pupils also know to use the 'worry boxes' in their classrooms if they wish to write down their worries instead. Leaders have trained staff to provide pupils with mental health and emotional support on site.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They want every pupil to 'realise their unique potential and enjoy fullness of life'. Overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils' achievements are particularly strong in English and mathematics. Leaders are working hard to replicate these positive outcomes in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils are kind and polite. They show respect towards adults and are always keen to lend a hand to their peers and staff. On the odd occasion when bullying occurs, staff deal with it promptly and effectively.

Leaders are keen for pupils to experience and understand the world outside their school. For example, pupils correspond with pen pals from their partner school in Uganda. They also recently worked with artists from the local university on a specialist art project. Pupils enjoyed producing a collaborative rug tapestry inspired by the themes of identity and well-being.

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

Leaders have put in place a curriculum that is well considered and arranged. Leaders and staff work together well to make sure that the planned learning allows for pupils to reach

the ambitious curriculum end points. Curriculum thinking is clear on what exactly pupils are expected to study and remember, and by when.

In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence and expertise. They introduce concepts clearly, supported by appropriate resources. For example, they take complex ideas in a subject and split these into smaller parts, which pupils find easier to manage and understand. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow the curriculum effectively. In a few subjects, however, teaching does not ensure that pupils have the essential knowledge that is required to grasp the concepts that will be taught next. This affects how well pupils secure their understanding.

Leaders use assessments well to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, they found that pupils needed more support for their vocabulary development. Leaders addressed this by ensuring that the curriculum focuses on helping pupils to acquire and use subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils remember and use new words in a subject correctly and in context. In early years, for example, children used the words 'location' and 'direction' when using a map for a treasure hunt. In Year 6, pupils learn and practise using words like 'tributary,' 'confluence' and 'source' when describing the journey of a river.

Leaders and staff know their pupils well. They work with local nurseries, families and external health specialists to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils are supported effectively and are learning the curriculum well.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of early reading. They are always looking for ways to improve how pupils learn phonics. They have invested in a phonics programme and trained staff to deliver it with precision and confidence. Across the school, phonics is taught consistently.

Staff assess pupils regularly on how well they are learning their letter sounds. This enables staff to identify those who are falling behind at the earliest opportunity. These pupils are supported to catch up quickly. However, in a few instances, some pupils struggle to blend the sounds they have learned to read words speedily. This is because, sometimes, they do not get lots of well-focused, additional practice with staff in this aspect of reading.

Pupils behave well, both in and out of lessons. Disruptions to learning are rare. Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Pupil mentors and playground leaders support younger pupils in school. Pupils also get to engage with democracy for themselves as they elect their school council representatives. Plenty of educational visits are planned to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' wider development. For example, the annual Year 6 residential trip provides experiences that aim to promote pupils' skills and confidence in working as part of a team.

Staff are proud to be a part of the 'St James' family'. They appreciate the support they receive from leaders to ensure their workload remains manageable. They comment that, in this school, pupils and adults alike look after and care for each other well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know their pupils and families well. They act effectively to spot signs that a pupil might be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Referrals to appropriate agencies are prompt.

Irrespective of when they join the school, new staff are required to complete a thorough safeguarding induction. Leaders also maintain a thorough approach to completing the required checks on adults' suitability to work with pupils.

Pupils are given lots of information on how to keep themselves safe at school, at home, or when online. They are knowledgeable about e-safety, road safety, stranger danger, privacy, and dignity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teaching does not consistently ensure that pupils have acquired and remember the essential knowledge they need to understand new concepts. This means that some pupils struggle when these new ideas are introduced. Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely check that pupils have secured the component knowledge they need to understand new learning.
- On occasion, when practising reading, pupils are not reminded to apply their knowledge of sounds to help them to decode unknown words speedily. This hampers pupils' reading fluency. Leaders should ensure that reading practice provides well-targeted support for pupils to blend the sounds they already know to read words speedily.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 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	100727
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10240776
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Edwards
Headteacher	Sonia McFarlane
Website	www.st-jameshatcham.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character took place in November 2017.

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 that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the vice chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of pre-employment checks, as well as other records. The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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