

Inspection of St Matthew's School, Westminster

18 Old Pye Street, Westminster, London SW1P 2DG

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and welcoming school. Adults are calm, caring and kind. They keep pupils safe and think carefully about how to meet each of their needs. One parent or carer, typical of the views of many, praised the way in which staff get to know each child individually.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well and work hard, which they typically do. The curriculum is broad and interesting. Pupils produce work of a good quality. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. For example, pupils in Year 6 valued a recent workshop on mental health, including managing change. They are encouraged to identify their feelings and to reach out for help when needed.

Leaders organise outings, workshops and visits from external speakers, including former pupils. Through this, pupils are taught about different careers. A range of extra-curricular clubs support the curriculum, such as reading and mathematics clubs. Others extend pupils' experiences, such as science in art, journalism, 'mini music' and choir.

Leaders emphasise the importance of mutual respect and tolerance through the curriculum and special events. Pupils enjoy initiatives to celebrate the range of cultural heritages within the school, such as international day and a recent, popular Coronation Club.

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

Leaders provide a broad curriculum covering a wide range of subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should know and be able to do over time. They take careful account of children's varied starting points in the early years and ensure that they are ready for the move to Year 1. For example, children learn number bonds to 10 securely, ready for making calculations and working with larger numbers in Year 1. However, in some subjects, teachers sometimes provide work that does not focus on the most important concepts that pupils need to know. In those instances, pupils do not study what leaders intend them to, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders provide training to help teachers develop their subject knowledge. Teachers present new information clearly. They revisit important previously taught content to help pupils to recall it. Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding systematically. On occasion, pupils' misconceptions are not swiftly identified and addressed and, as a result, gaps and misconceptions persist.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to read a wide range of texts. For example, all pupils begin each new term with poetry study, before moving on to non-fiction and fiction texts including novels that aim to inspire pupils' own writing.

Leaders ensure that there is a clear curriculum in place for early reading and quality training for all staff who deliver it. From Reception, children learn the phonic knowledge they need to become fluent readers quickly. Leaders swiftly identify any pupils who need extra help and provide the support they need to catch up, including plenty of reading practice.

Leaders carefully identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They have devised personalised plans to ensure that teachers and other adults know how to meet pupils' needs so that they can access the curriculum. Leaders involve parents of pupils with SEND in deciding how to best support their children.

Pupils study a carefully considered wider curriculum covering such important topics as health and relationships. The school draws on external expertise. Pupils value hearing from specialists from the emergency services about how to keep themselves safe, for example. Pupils regularly hear strong messages about the school's values of belonging, believing and achieving during collective worship. Pupils said that this is a school that teaches respect and values everyone.

Leaders have recently revised their behaviour policy, with a focus on helping pupils to recognise their emotional state, articulate their feelings and manage them through a range of strategies. Children in the early years learn to share and take turns. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for others. They share the school's spaces well and interact with one another with great consideration. Classrooms are settled places where pupils can focus on learning. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and have effective systems to address attendance issues, underpinned by a detailed knowledge of pupils and families. There have been marked improvements in pupils' attendance since the pandemic.

Leaders work with the local authority and diocese to help them improve the school further. The governing body makes an important contribution to improving the school. Staff are very positive about all areas of school life, including the support for their workload and the interest leaders take in their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance within the school. Staff are well trained and know well the risks pupils might encounter. They report all concerns.

Leaders carefully assess each report and take swift action where needed, drawing on the support and advice of external services where appropriate. They are diligent in ensuring that pupils, and their families, receive all the help they need.

Pupils talk to the adults if they have any concerns. Leaders give them age-appropriate messages to help them understand risks and how to stay safe, including the steps they can take to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few of the foundation subjects, teaching sometimes provides work that does not focus on the most important concepts that pupils need to know. As a result, pupils do not learn all that leaders intend in a few areas of the curriculum, including pupils with SEND. The school should ensure that the work provided to pupils, including those with SEND, helps them to learn the planned curriculum in its intended detail in all subjects.
- In some cases, teaching does not check pupils' understanding of the intended curriculum systematically. As a result, on occasion pupils' misconceptions are not swiftly identified and addressed and they go on to new learning with some gaps or misconceptions. The school should ensure that pupils' understanding of the curriculum is checked systematically and any gaps and misconceptions are addressed swiftly.

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	101138
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10287185
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Chester
Headteacher	Rachel Jewitt (executive headteacher) Helen Selinas and Sarah Green (heads of school)
Website	www.stmwschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in an informal partnership with another local school and the executive headteacher oversees both schools.
- The school is currently lead by two heads of school, who were previously in post as deputy headteachers.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of London.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was carried out in May 2016. It is due for its next section 48 inspection by the end of 2024.
- The school makes use of alternative provision.

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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and art.
- 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 looked at curriculum information in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and two heads of school. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, early years, behaviour, attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the governing body, the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lando Du Plooy

Ofsted Inspector

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