

Inspection of St Stephen's Primary School

Whitfield Road, London E6 1AS

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2011.

The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act in January 2018.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this excellent school. It is no surprise to see why St Stephen's is such a popular place to be. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their school. They work extremely hard in lessons and rise to the high expectations set for them.

Throughout their time at school, pupils achieve exceptionally well in all subjects. In addition to pupils' high levels of academic success, the school's work to support pupils' social and emotional development is also very strong. Over time, pupils develop into confident, independent and resilient learners. When the time comes, pupils move on to secondary school with the knowledge, skills and qualities needed for their next steps.

Pupils are brilliant role models. They demonstrate the school's values in all that they do. This is because the school's 'We care' philosophy runs through everything that happens. It helps pupils to understand and respect others. Pupils said that this is a school where everyone feels valued and where they can be themselves. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and this allows everyone to learn in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Pupils particularly like the school's facilities, such as the glass pods in the playground and the all the exciting play equipment outside. They love coming to school, and this is shown in their high attendance.

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

One of the biggest strengths of St Stephen's is the meticulous attention to detail at every level. This makes a real difference to pupils' learning and achievement. Leaders and teachers monitor closely each pupil's progress through the curriculum. They waste no time in identifying and sorting out any gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils get the right help at the right time. In all subjects, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Teachers, subject specialists and support staff know precisely what pupils need to know and when. The curriculum is delivered in a way that allows pupils to develop a deep and secure understanding of what they have been taught.

It all starts in the early years where children settle quickly. Here, staff promote children's language and their use of vocabulary very effectively. For example, as children completed observational drawings of large snails, they used words correctly such as 'antennae'. Others used the word 'hemisphere' correctly when describing the world. Further up the school, pupils develop a secure grasp of concepts and important subject words. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked in detail about fair trade. They linked this to other aspects of their learning, including countries of the world. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a deep understanding of the Caribbean. They used this to make insightful and well-considered comparisons to the United Kingdom. In Spanish, pupils in Year 3 had fun remembering what they had learned previously. As well as showing their strong spoken Spanish, pupils remembered key

features of Spain, such as which countries border it and why lemons, for example, grow well there.

Reading is given the highest priority right from the start. Pupils learn to use phonics for reading and spelling. By the end of Year 1, the vast majority of pupils are fluent readers. Pupils' mathematics knowledge develops securely. Pupils in Year 6 used their prior learning about protractors to help them tackle more complex problems, such as calculating missing angles. Published assessment information shows that pupils' achievement is significantly above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Over the past few years, standards have been very high in all measures.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school at various times of the year are very well supported. Staff have expertise in identifying and meeting pupils' needs, especially for pupils who spend some of their time in 'The Hub'.

Relationships throughout the school are warm and positive. Pupils get on well together. For example, in Reception, children worked brilliantly together to work out the quickest way of filling the buckets with water from the pump. 'Well-being ambassadors' help to promote good mental and physical health. These pupils enjoy looking out for those who might be feeling sad and finding ways to help them to feel better again. Pupils have opportunities to experience different social and cultural events, including theatre trips and residential. Pupils proudly share their work in different exhibitions, for example, at the school-wide project about pupils' heritages. Year 5 pupils recently entered a national poetry competition. They were delighted to hear that their masterpieces had been officially published.

Pupils have a real say in what happens in school. The 'curriculum ambassadors' help leaders to evaluate learning in different subjects. Student council representatives were responsible for introducing 'meat free Mondays' and the new gym equipment outside.

Leaders put pupils at the heart of every decision that is made. Leaders' passion, rigour and determination have enabled the excellent quality of education to be maintained over many years. Leaders have the full support of staff, parents and carers. Staff are dedicated to the school because they feel valued and well cared for. Leaders' strong emphasis on staff development supports the school's culture of high ambition. Staff and parents spoke of the 'St Stephen's family'. This team spirit makes the school such a happy and welcoming place to be a part of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102748
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10267935
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	621
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shashankar Jana
Headteacher	Neena Lall OBE
Website	www.st-stephens-primary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Stephen's Primary School is part of a federation with St Stephen's Nursery School. Both schools are led by the same headteacher. The nursery school is inspected separately.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and the assistant headteachers. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the

chair. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector met with the director of children's services.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, science, religious education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of pupils and evaluated the responses to the online pupil surveys. Inspectors reviewed the responses to the online staff survey and met with staff at various times throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation related to governance, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Guy Forbat	His Majesty's Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	His Majesty's Inspector

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