

# Inspection of The Urswick School - A Church of England Secondary School

Paragon Road, Hackney, London E9 6NR

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and safe at this school. They join from a range of cultural backgrounds and with varying starting points. Pupils recognise these differences and show respect towards each other's views and experiences. The school aims to equip pupils to contribute fully to society. They also encourage pupils to be ambitious when planning their next steps in education or employment. Leaders help pupils to achieve these aims, and pupils respond well to these high expectations.

The school's vision is underpinned by its Christian ethos, and leaders act with care to meet pupils' needs. For example, all pupils receive free school meals. Pupils are proud of the opportunities they have to contribute to the wider community, such as sixth form students who volunteer to act as mentors to younger pupils.

In the classroom, pupils behave well and with a positive attitude towards their learning. The school has a clear system in place that is understood by pupils and teachers about what acceptable behaviour looks like. Most of the time, pupils follow these rules well. If a more serious incident occurs, the school acts swiftly to resolve the issue and learning is not disrupted. These same high standards of behaviour apply outside of the classroom.

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

The school has a clear curriculum in place. It is matched to the national curriculum and offers pupils a full range of subjects throughout Years 7 to 9. Leaders have prioritised the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects to increase the proportion of pupils accessing a broad range of qualifications in Years 10 and 11. For example, science has become a compulsory subject at GCSE. In the sixth form, pupils can build on their subject knowledge and develop a chosen expertise with the Extended Project Qualification.

The curriculum is well organised with key knowledge and vocabulary identified. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are expected to access this same key knowledge and skills. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are able to meet pupils' needs, including in the sixth form where pupils are given additional help to ensure that they can access the curriculum successfully. In a few subjects, the school has not been able to recruit a full team of specialist teachers and, at times, this leads to an inconsistent learning experience in the classroom. Leaders have taken action to minimise the impact of this. Teachers receive regular professional development to support their practice and appreciate the quality of guidance they receive.

In lessons, teachers deliver subject content clearly and make necessary adjustments to ensure that pupils can access activities. For example, pupils with SEND are provided with specialised resources to support their learning in mathematics. Most of the time, teachers use effective methods to check that pupils have understood what

is being taught. However, sometimes lessons move on before pupils are ready to do so.

The school has placed a focus on developing literacy and reading skills. Pupils who need additional help with their reading are quickly identified and receive support. This continues until pupils have made sufficient progress and their fluency reaches a level where they can easily access the curriculum across different subjects.

Leaders have improved pupils' punctuality and attendance to minimise how much learning is missed. Pupils attend well. They value the opportunities that are provided by the school to develop their knowledge and experience. These include a range of additional clubs and activities, such as volleyball and charity club.

The school has an established programme in place to build pupils' character. This includes opportunities to develop independence and adopt healthy lifestyles. The 'Urswick Parents' role that teachers take on provides a trusted adult with whom pupils can share concerns and raise any issues. As a result, pupils feel safe and well accepted by others. The school's vision of being a 'source of nourishment to the community' is achieved by pupils. For example, sixth form students take up volunteering roles within the school, including leading assemblies on cultural awareness.

In Years 7 to 11, pupils are taught about important issues and to respect others who may be different to themselves. These include understanding how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils benefit from guidance on their next steps, including accessing a helpful careers fair. In the sixth form, this extends to a programme of advice to develop financial skills and independence as pupils prepare for life after school.

Leaders have broadened the curriculum offer since the last inspection. Pupils learn a language from the start of Year 7. Governors have an awareness of curriculum developments and secure oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Leaders also ensure that staff well-being is prioritised and teachers feel happy, supported and listened to.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- At times, the school does not routinely check pupils' understanding of what they have been taught. This means that gaps can emerge in pupils' knowledge. The school should embed consistent practices to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked before moving on to new learning.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100284
<b>Local authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289775
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	843
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Roger Pryce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Brown
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theurswickschool.co.uk">www.theurswickschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school. It received its last section 48 inspection on 13 and 14 October 2021.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with representatives from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders around policies and practices, including: the sixth form, pupil behaviour and enrichment opportunities.
- 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 reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' school evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' personal development, records for behaviour and attendance, and reports to those responsible for oversight.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to understand their experience of the school.

## Inspection team

Karim Ismail, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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