

Inspection of John Ball Primary School

Southvale Road, Blackheath, London SE3 0TP

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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 November 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' and staff's vision 'to nurture each child to reach their full potential' comes to life at this school. Pupils love their school and being part of the John Ball community. This is reflected in their high attendance. They proudly talk to visitors about their learning and everything their school has to offer.

Aspiration and ambition permeate through every aspect of this school. Not only do leaders and staff have high expectations of what pupils can, and do, achieve, but the pupils also have high expectations of themselves and others. Everyone works to the school motto of 'together we all learn to achieve and thrive in every way'.

Pupils' conduct and behaviour for learning are exceptional. Pupils understand expectations because rules and routines have been established jointly with them. Pupils are diligent in lessons. Starting from the early years, they demonstrate a deep understanding of the importance of learning and how everything the school does supports them to know more and remember more.

The provision for pupils' personal development is rooted in the everyday curriculum and wider-school offer. There is an extensive range of additional activities, including clubs and sporting opportunities. Pupils relish the opportunities to assume responsibility through the 'pathways to life' initiative. Older pupils can be house captains, well-being ambassadors, office assistants and prefects, to name just a few of the wide-ranging roles available.

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

The school has a unique air of excitement and energy about what is already working so successfully, but also about the work being done to improve things further. The governing body, leaders and staff are proactive and relentless in their approach to ensuring that each and every pupil at this school receives a high-quality of education and care. The academic and personal development of every pupil is a priority.

The strength of the curriculum lies in its coherence and precision. Starting from the early years, the curriculum has been designed with a focus on knowledge, skills and vocabulary. Essential building blocks of learning are clearly identified and subsequently broken down into small steps. Lessons are well sequenced and build on one another. This high level of intentional design means that pupils develop a deep body of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. They are remembering what they have been taught and make meaningful links across subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience the same curriculum as their peers. Staff skilfully adapt the teaching of the curriculum so that these pupils are able to access the learning and achieve the intended outcomes. Regular checks on what pupils know and can do ensure that any gaps or

misconceptions are addressed. No pupil is left behind in their learning. They achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders and staff understand that becoming a fluent reader is the gateway to all other learning. Teaching pupils to read is an absolute priority. Starting in Nursery, children are immersed in stories and rhymes. In the Reception Year, there is a sharp focus on teaching children the sounds that letters make. Daily phonics sessions continue into Year 1 and 2 so that pupils get lots of practice and opportunities to recap their learning. Pupils read books that are closely matched to their phonics knowledge. Older pupils also benefit from daily focused reading lessons and opportunities to explore high-quality texts in depth. Pupils that are not keeping up are quickly identified and additional support is put in place.

Reading for pleasure and across the curriculum are actively encouraged. For example, the 'curriculum tree' provides texts that link to learning across all subjects. Pupils benefit from author visits, use of the school library and the book vending machines that promote a love of reading.

Pupils are polite, articulate and well mannered. Relationships are based on mutual respect. The school's 'PRIDE' values of 'personal excellence, respect, innovation & creativity, determination and equality' are known and understood. These values, along with the clear behaviour expectations of 'Be ready, Be kind, Be safe', are followed by all, including leaders, staff and the governing body. At social times, pupils play happily together. They said that everyone here is kind and they look out for each other. Pupils value the range of opportunities they have during their social times, such as the 'club hub', where they can take part in quieter, calmer activities.

Every aspect of school life is purposeful and has been well considered. The school's curriculum, provision for pupils' personal development, PRIDE values and behaviour expectations and routines are all interwoven. This results in pupils being very well-prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships. They explore their own emotions and understand that not all families look the same. Pupils are kind and respect one another. They know that there is a network of support for them through the 'hive', which is an approach used by the school to respond to pupils' worries and concerns.

The school has thorough and effective systems in place to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

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	100709
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10327629
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	609
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nina Hodges
Headteacher	Jacqui Noakes
Website	www.johnball.lewisham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and history. 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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, teachers, governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey as well as responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Julie Wright, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Barry Blakelock	Ofsted Inspector
Lorraine Slee	Ofsted Inspector
Hayley McClenaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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