

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

Baldwins Gardens, Holborn, London EC1N 7SD

Inspection date: 17 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils described their school as a 'family' and a 'caring community'. They enjoy attending and they are kept safe. Pupils like the small size of the school and they get to know everyone. They get on very well with one another and enjoy their playtimes together. Pupils trust adults in the school to resolve any issues that may arise.

The school is highly ambitious for all its pupils. Starting in early years, the school provides a broad curriculum that engages children and deepens their knowledge. Staff are relentless in removing any barriers to pupils' learning that may exist. Leaders take full advantage of the school's location to enrich pupils' learning. For example, pupils visit the nearby British Library and the school welcomes reading volunteers from a local law firm. Year 6 pupils develop their areas of interest via the 'university' project, which provides experiences in writing, drama, dance and music. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their transition to secondary school.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are thoughtful and caring, treating one another with respect. Pupils of all ages learn how to manage their emotions and take responsibility for their actions. They are articulate and are keen to contribute to their school community, for example through charity fundraising.

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

The school makes sure that all pupils follow a programme of study that matches the breadth and richness of the national curriculum. The school also extends pupils' learning beyond this in several subject areas. Subject leaders are very clear about what they want pupils to know and remember in their subjects. Pupils learn knowledge and skills in a logical order that builds strongly on their prior learning. This allows pupils to complete more complex tasks as they progress through the school. For example, in art, pupils learn

about sculpture. They learn to use different artistic media to create and improve their pieces of work. Pupils also learn the vocabulary that they need to evaluate their own work as well as that of great artists.

Leaders ensure that teachers receive the training that they need to deliver the ambitious curriculum effectively. As a result, teachers have secure subject-specific knowledge across the subjects that they teach. Teachers follow the school's agreed approach to lesson delivery. For example, they check pupils' recall of prior learning before introducing new concepts. Teachers look for any gaps in pupils' prior learning or misconceptions that they may have. They deal with them immediately. As a result, pupils gain an excellent understanding of what they have studied and are ready for the next steps in their learning.

The school swiftly identifies any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have when they join the school. Following this early identification, the school puts appropriate help in place to support pupils with SEND effectively. This includes working with outside agencies to make sure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and planned for. Additionally, learning activities and tasks for pupils with SEND are broken down into smaller chunks when needed. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers.

Teaching pupils to read accurately and fluently is a priority in this school. Leaders swiftly assess children's prior phonics knowledge when they join the school. No time is wasted in starting the school's chosen reading programme. Staff are very well trained and deliver the scheme consistently across the school. As a result, pupils confidently use the knowledge and strategies that they are taught to read words accurately. Teachers read to pupils daily during story time and this promotes the love of reading in the school. Pupils take home books that match the letter sounds that they know to practise their reading. Parents and carers are encouraged and supported with helping their children learn to read. An example of this is the popular 'books and biscuits' sessions that the school runs.

The school has extremely high expectations for pupils' behaviour, from early years up. Pupils understand these and are keen to meet them. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and fairly. As a result, pupils focus on their learning and very rarely distract others. Pupils' attendance is improving because of the strategies implemented by leaders. The school works closely with families and external agencies to stress the importance of regular attendance. This work is having a strong impact.

The school plans educational visits to enrich the curriculum and pupils' learning. Pupils like their outings to the Science Museum and the Tower of London, for example. Older pupils really enjoy their residential trips in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have also performed at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the Camden Young Voices programme. Pupils are taught to be kind and respectful to each other. Pupils learn about the diversity of Britain and the importance of treating everyone equally.

School leaders make sure that staff receive the training and support needed to perform their roles effectively. Leaders consider staff workload when making changes and staff value this.

The governing body knows the school well. It visits often and holds leaders to account for their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2019.

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 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	100036
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10345617
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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Trigg
Headteacher	Rebecca Hughes
Website	www.stalbanscamden.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England School. The last section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in February 2020.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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. The 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 headteacher and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and several other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and mathematics. 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 also considered pupils' learning in other subjects, including history and science.

- 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 met with groups of pupils in all key stages. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about the school's work, including about safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors also looked at staff, parent and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karim Ismail

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024