

Inspection of St Paul's Whitechapel Church of England Primary School

Wellclose Square, Stepney, London, E1 8HY

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school provides a caring and inclusive community. The school's vision, known by all the pupils, is to 'Let our light shine'. Pupils are happy and safe. They have warm and positive relationships with staff and each other. They are polite and respectful.

Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. They make strong progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This is reflected in national assessments. Pupils are typically well prepared for the next stages of their learning.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school; they are given a say. They have opportunities to help in the local community, for example with the local foodbank. This supports their understanding of others' needs and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of educational visits on offer to places such as Kew Gardens, the Bank of England and the Science Museum. These visits are carefully planned and enrich learning further.

The school places high emphasis on healthy eating and pupils' well-being. Older pupils are proud to support the younger children during family lunches. Pupils also enjoy learning about the environment and ecology. They are knowledgeable about the school beehives. For example, they understand that many plants depend on bees for pollination, and in return, bees rely on plants for food.

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

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum. Most subjects have been well sequenced from the early years onwards, to map out what pupils will learn and when. This means that the curriculum supports pupils to be ready for what they will be learning next. For example, in early mathematics, children learn to quickly count to 10 and beyond. Older pupils build on this knowledge to understand mathematical concepts such as addition and subtraction.

Children in the early years settle quickly to well-established routines. They get a very strong start to their education through a curriculum designed to help children securely build the knowledge and skills that they need in the different areas of learning. This ensures that children are fully ready to engage with and be successful in learning the Year 1 curriculum. For instance, children explored the life cycle of butterflies, witnessing the transformation from chrysalis to a butterfly. These well-planned, hands-on experiences support their communication, language, and literacy skills, while also broadening their knowledge of the world.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Children get excellent foundations in early years because there is a clear focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Adults skilfully support pupils who find learning phonics and reading

more difficult, helping them to catch up quickly. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Staff thoughtfully choose diverse texts and poetry for older pupils to help them to develop a love of reading. Across the school, pupils' reading develops well.

Teachers use assessment effectively to identify and address any misconceptions. Pupils who fall behind are quickly spotted and then supported to catch up promptly. Leaders have recently adapted the school's aims for learning in some of the wider curriculum subjects, carefully considering the knowledge and skills that pupils need by the end of each year. However, these new plans have not been implemented with precision. Consequently, some pupils do not develop a secure understanding of subject content over time. Leaders recognise this and have appropriate plans in place to address this.

The school has high aspirations that all pupils will succeed and has worked hard to identify individual needs, and barriers to learning. Disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve well. Staff work together to write targets for pupils' learning and development that are precise and appropriate. Learning is adapted to pupils' needs effectively.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority for the school. The provision in place is of excellent quality. Pupils are taught to respect differences in the world and celebrate the cultural things that they have in common. For example, the school uses cookery classes to teach pupils about different cultures and traditions. Work to support pupils' all-round development, including preparing them to be responsible future citizens, is particularly strong and well embedded. Educational trips and visits are carefully linked to the curriculum. For example, when learning about rivers and architecture, pupils visit the River Thames, and when learning about history, they explore what they know on a visit to the British Museum.

Behaviour is impeccable, both in lessons and around the school. The school environment is calm and purposeful. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils play well together. They know the expectations for how they should behave, and they rise to this. The school promotes pupils' good attendance effectively. Expectations are clear and, as a result, most pupils now attend regularly.

Leaders at all levels have a strong commitment to the school's values, ethos and ambition. The governing body is skilled, well informed and active in its roles. Governors regularly visit the school and provide a strong level of challenge and support to help move the school forward. Staff said they feel well supported with workload and feel valued. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is not currently implemented with the consistent precision that leaders intend. As a result, some pupils do not secure the depth of knowledge and understanding that they should. The school should ensure the implementation of the curriculum in each subject is checked, so that any necessary support or professional development can be provided.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use 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	100959
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10323265
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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robin Precey
Headteacher	Darren Rubin (Executive headteacher) Kathy Blake (Deputy headteacher)
Website	www.st-pauls.towerhamlets.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school.
- The most recent section 48 statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) was in June 2018.
- The school is in a federation with St John's Church of England Primary School in Tower Hamlets. The executive headteacher oversees both schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and teachers. They spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and with a representative from the London Diocesan Board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of school 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.
- The inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of parents and staff, including their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sean Flood, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Susan Maguire

His Majesty's Inspector

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