

Simon Marks Jewish Primary School

75 Cazenove Road, Stoke Newington, Hackney, London N16 6PD

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked effectively to ensure that the improvement points from the previous inspection have all been met.
- Senior leaders, ably supported by the governing body, know the school well and are clear about what needs to be done to build on these improvements.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to ensure pupils' needs are met.
- The teaching of reading is particularly effective because teachers have sound subject knowledge in this area. However, pupils are not encouraged to use their strong reading skills to help them with their spelling.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents echo this.
- A particular strength is the promotion of fundamental British values across the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also promoted extremely well.
- Relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils are positive. Pupils show respect and good manners.
- Attendance has improved and rates of persistent absence have decreased.
- Behaviour in lessons has improved. Pupils are attentive and focus well on tasks.
- Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced and exclusion rates have dropped to zero.
- Children learn well in early years because leaders ensure that there is a good range of activities to engage them.
- Pupils mostly take pride in the appearance of their books. The work in their English books is very neatly presented. However, there is some variability in presentation in mathematics books.
- The middle tier of leadership has been well developed since the previous inspection.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because tasks are closely matched to their needs. This is not always the case in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further by:
 - capitalising on pupils' strong phonics skills to improve spelling across the school, especially in key stage 2
 - ensuring that presentation in mathematics books is as consistently neat as in English books
 - matching tasks better to pupils' starting points in topic work, particularly for the most- and least able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors know the school well. They have charted the successful improvements made since the previous inspection carefully and are aware of what they need to do next. Leaders have benefited from advice and guidance from the local authority over the last few years. This has helped them develop key skills such as the ability to write tightly focused improvement plans.
- Support for teachers at the early stage of their career is good. Teachers say that they feel that their professional development is well provided for and that this has helped them become strong practitioners. They also speak highly of the local authority's training for newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders provide appropriate training and support, so that staff can strengthen their skills and develop their expertise in particular subjects or interventions. This has helped to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Leadership has been strengthened. There is now an effective tier of middle leaders in the school. They support the senior leadership team in checking on the quality of teaching in their phase or area of responsibility. This has contributed significantly to the improvements seen since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have linked the school's performance management system to the priorities on the improvement plan, thereby involving everyone in the school's success.
- The pupil premium funding is used in a range of ways to ensure that eligible pupils have an equal chance of reaching success both academically and in terms of their personal development. Consequently, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are good. For example, all of them regularly reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2.
- Leaders have ensured that the special educational needs funding is spent on effective provision. Information about current pupils' achievement shows that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to make good progress from their starting points.
- The physical education and sport premium is used effectively and its impact is monitored by governors. The school uses the funding in part to enable pupils to be active at lunchtime. This not only results in improved physical well-being, but also in pupils being more ready for learning after lunch. Leaders have also audited teaching in physical education. They noted, for example, that staff were less secure in teaching gymnastics than other skills and arranged relevant training to build confidence and subject knowledge.

- The curriculum provides ample scope for pupils to develop key skills across a range of

subjects. There is clear evidence of music and art being used to provide excellent learning opportunities both in lessons and beyond the school environment. For example, the 10-piece mixed-instrument band, which includes two bass guitars and a cello, plays in the local chapel. Pupils take part in a range of local and national events such as Jewish dance festivals and the local authority's arts festival. Creative projects are taught through Jewish studies, which really enriches pupils' learning. This is further enhanced by themed days, such as the whole-school art day for Tu B'Shevat, where pupils across the school drew inspiration from different artists famous for their depictions of trees and plants using a range of media.

- Pupils also have themed days linked to their class topics. This allows them to get immersed in the world of, for example, the Tudors, or life under the sea, supporting all areas of their learning. Home-learning projects deepen their learning further. However, pupils' learning in subjects such as history and geography, their 'topic' subjects, is not as strong as in English and mathematics because tasks are not as well matched to their starting points.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school. It permeates all subjects and all aspects of school life. Leaders map out topics and enrichment experiences to ensure that no opportunity is missed to discuss and learn about key values, including the fundamental British values of tolerance, respect, democracy and the rule of law.
- The majority of parents' views were positive. However, some parents did express concerns, through both the online survey and in person. The main areas that worried them were the number of changes of leadership and the high turnover of teachers since the previous inspection. However, there is now a stable staff for next year, and governors have been successful in appointing a new substantive headteacher. Hopefully, parents' concerns will therefore abate as the year progresses.
- The local authority has provided very effective support for the school. It will now be reducing its involvement as its recent assessment aligns with the inspection's view that the school is now good.

Governance of the school

- Governors have provided effective challenge and support since the previous monitoring visit to ensure that key improvements were made. They know the school well and challenge leaders to ensure that priorities are met.
- Governors have areas of responsibility. When they visit the school, they focus on their area. For example, the governor linked with special educational needs has made a series of visits to ensure that she fully understands the procedures and processes in place for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She looks at a range of information about the provision for them and evaluates its effectiveness. In this way, she knows that the funding is being well spent to meet their needs.
- Governors know that, to be able to support the school on the next step of its journey, they need to be exceptionally effective. To this end, they have embarked on a series of audits from which they will produce an action plan to streamline their work further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that staff know how to report concerns. These are subsequently logged carefully and analysed by one of the designated safeguarding team. When necessary, leaders make referrals to external agencies to ensure the best possible outcome for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders ensure that checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough and recorded in a meticulous and detailed way. Staff, volunteers, governors and external providers, such as for music or sport, have all been subject to the relevant checks. Governors regularly verify that training is kept up to date and that staff are all familiar with the most recent versions of key safeguarding documents. Pupils, parents and staff are all positive about safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment successfully since the previous inspection.
- New topics in history, geography and science often launch with a grand opening event such as a trip or a visiting show or workshop. This generates excitement and immediately begins to build pupils' knowledge and skills. At the end of each topic, pupils showcase their work, which gives teachers the opportunity to evaluate how much they have learned. For example, when studying Ancient Egypt, Year 4 pupils turned their classroom into a museum of Egyptology. Pupils had to make all the exhibits and then write labels for them based on what they had learned over the course of the previous half term.
- Teachers use a range of strategies and resources to keep learning fresh and to invigorate the curriculum. For example, they use film clips and paintings as stimuli for learning, and group pupils in a variety of different ways to develop their social skills, including mixing younger and older pupils to work on specific projects. There are also regular opportunities to reason, and to justify and reflect on key ideas. This develops pupils' thinking well.
- Teachers weave the promotion of British values into lessons wherever they can. For example, following the terrorist acts in London and Manchester, pupils reflected on all the religions they have learned about and decided that no religion would condone such actions. Owing to the teacher's expert questioning, pupils were able to reflect on how these acts also go against the very grain of the British values they regularly learn about and are encouraged to exemplify. This lesson was timed carefully to coincide with the national minute's silence for the victims of the London Bridge attacks.
- Teachers are attuned to pupils' learning in lessons. Teachers are adept at moving learning on rapidly when pupils have understood a concept. Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully throughout lessons and are equally confident to slow the pace to tackle misconceptions and clarify ideas.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support. They work both in classrooms and by delivering specific interventions for targeted groups. Teachers give them clear direction, so that they can have the maximum impact on pupils' progress.

- Teachers provide a good level of challenge and support for pupils from all starting points in English and mathematics, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged. However, work in pupils' topic books shows that, in other subjects such as history and geography, teachers do not match tasks to pupils' needs as effectively. Work is therefore sometimes too easy for the most able and too difficult for the least able. On these occasions, progress slows for those two groups.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use to set tasks that move pupils' learning forward rapidly. A lot of English work is based on high-quality books. This builds on pupils' well-developed reading skills and so deepens their understanding. Consequently, pupils read well. They use their strong phonics skills alongside other strategies to become increasingly fluent readers. However, teachers do not encourage pupils to use the same phonics skills to develop accuracy in spelling.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Through the introduction of new guidelines on feedback, pupils are developing the skills and understanding to evaluate their own learning. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were very clear as to how they know they are making progress and what helps them learn.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the various ways in which bullying can manifest itself, including the more insidious type where the bully encourages others to ignore the victim deliberately to the point where the victim feels completely ostracised. Pupils are adamant that bullying is exceptionally rare at Simon Marks.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They appreciate the many ways in which leaders work to keep them safe, including in the security of the site. In lessons and assemblies, pupils are taught about a range of issues such as fire safety, drugs awareness, road safety and how to use public transport sensibly. The school also has a well-rehearsed lock-down procedure. Pupils stress that this all makes them feel safe. Most parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about how to stay safe online. They cite the regular reminders about this, both in assemblies and in lessons, as key. Pupils are clear that you must never divulge your personal details or arrange to meet anyone you only know through online contact.
- The strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports pupils' emotional well-being. The beneficial use of the physical education and sport premium ensures that pupils have good opportunities to enhance their physical well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy since the previous inspection. Pupils are rewarded for making good choices in their behaviour. Pupils respond well to this, and they are keen to see their name card move towards gold. This has supported leaders to improve behaviour for learning and to reduce the incidence of exclusions to zero.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the building and show respect for each other, for adults and for their environment. There is a harmonious atmosphere at playtime. When there are minor disputes, for example about football, pupils usually sort these out themselves quickly and sensibly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They follow class rules and expectations and focus on their work. When asked to discuss their learning, pupils use this time effectively to reflect on the point in question. These positive attitudes allow lessons to proceed smoothly and learning time to be maximised.
- Pupils take great care when presenting work in most of their books. Their English books are particularly neat. However, work in mathematics books does not always show the same high standards.
- Leaders track incidents of behaviour which infringe the behaviour policy. These are logged online and leaders analyse them regularly. The current log shows that most are one-off, minor incidents. Where pupils have particular behavioural needs, leaders work with external agencies to find ways to support these pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour.
- Attendance figures, which were low in 2015, improved, so that they were once again in line with national averages overall and for key groups in 2016. Leaders monitor attendance rates closely to ensure that this remains the case. Leaders are particularly mindful of groups that had previously high rates of persistent absence. Current figures show that attendance has improved for these groups and rates of persistent absence have therefore fallen.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve well. Across key stage 2, in 2016, they made good progress from their starting points to reach standards that were in line with the national averages in writing and mathematics. In reading, they made progress that was significantly above the national average. Consequently, a very high proportion reached the higher standard of greater depth.
- Outcomes in phonics are particularly strong. School information about pupils' achievement suggests that 100% of pupils will reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2 for the third year running.
- Owing to their proficiency in phonics, pupils are good readers. Pupils from both higher and lower starting points read fluently and with good expression. They possess and use a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and can explain what has helped them improve as readers.
- Inspectors looked carefully at work in pupils' books. This showed that disadvantaged

pupils make similarly good progress in acquiring key skills as other pupils in school from the same starting points because leaders use the funding well to diminish any differences. This is leading to good outcomes. For example, disadvantaged pupils' attainment at key stage 1 in 2016 was in line or above that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected and higher standards.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress because leaders ensure that their needs are well met. Staff plan work in English and mathematics well and make any necessary adaptations so that tasks present a challenge yet are accessible to pupils of all abilities. This is less evident in other subjects.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups do equally well because leaders are committed to promoting equality of opportunity. A strong focus on developing sophisticated vocabulary supports pupils who speak English as an additional language to do well.
- As pupils get ready for secondary school, there is an emphasis on teaching them key study skills so that they are well prepared for the transfer.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years because teaching supports them to make good progress whatever their starting points.
- Teachers provide a range of activities, both inside and outside, that support learning, generate excitement and help children engage well. Children are consequently keen to explore their environment.
- Teachers ensure that they provide opportunities for children to develop a range of skills. Activities are carefully designed to promote skills across as many different areas of learning as possible. Open-ended learning and opportunities to focus for extended periods are particularly well established in the outdoor environment. Leaders know there is more to do inside to match the highly effective practice outdoors. This is partly due to having very recently relocated to new classrooms while the early years unit is refurbished.
- Adults are skilled at interacting with children, encouraging them to extend their learning. For example, when children went outside on the second day of the inspection, they found that the slide was covered in water. Instead of clearing it up for them, the adult asked them what they could do. Initially, the children looked around for towels or similar but, not finding any, they finally settled on using plastic spades to scoop the water out. They were so proud to have solved the problem that they particularly enjoyed their play on the slide that day.
- The early years leader, one of the new middle leaders recruited since the previous inspection, provides strong leadership across the phase. She regularly scrutinises the observations that adults make of children to ensure that they are of a consistently high quality. She ensures that good practice is regularly shared. She and her team are vigilant about safety and ensure that all statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Outcomes in early years are good. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is regularly slightly above the national average. The early years leader is

now focusing on accelerating progress, so that more children exceed this standard.

- Disadvantaged children do well in early years. In 2016, the proportion that reached a good level of development far outstripped national figures at 100%.
- Children behave well. They are encouraged to sort out minor disagreements among themselves. This helps them develop strong social skills. For example, one child had built a model. Another child then attempted to take a piece of it to add to his own model. The teacher encouraged the first child to explain why this upset him. The second child listened respectfully and then returned the piece.
- There are positive relationships between children and adults and among children. Children visibly look out for one another. Inspectors observed a number of instances of children helping and supporting each other.
- Transition within the phase is well managed. Children currently attending Nursery have started having lunch in the main dinner hall to prepare them for next year when they will do this regularly once they move up to Reception.
- Parents contribute to building a strong picture of their children's needs and achievements. They can access the school's online assessment system and enter comments about what their child is enjoying at home. Staff take these into account when planning activities that spark children's interest and build on their existing skills.

School details

Unique reference number	100275
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10031717

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Pallis
Headteacher	Lisa Campbell
Telephone number	020 8806 6048
Website	www.simonmarks.hackney.sch.uk
Email address	info@simonmarks.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 May 2015

Information about this school

- Simon Marks is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- The school is a diverse community. Over two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, more than double the national average. The largest group, apart from White British, is pupils from any other White background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. However, fewer pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan than is the case nationally.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There is a breakfast club, run and managed by the school, as well as after-school provision run by an external provider.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class at least once. Many of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspection team scrutinised work in pupils' books from most year groups in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, a representative from the local authority, a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, and other key staff at the school including teachers at the early stages of their careers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and child protection, logs of behaviour incidents, attendance figures, information about pupils' academic progress and attainment, leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning, reports from local authority officers and checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspection team looked at behaviour around the building, in classes, in the playground and in the dinner hall at lunchtime, as well as talking to pupils, both formally and informally, about behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the comments left using the free-text facility. They also gathered parents' views at the beginning and the end of the school day. The 13 responses to the online staff survey, and the four responses to the online pupil survey, were also considered.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Jaeggi

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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