

# St John's Walworth Church of England Primary School

Larcom Street, London SE17 1NQ

## Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils' progress and attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 were well below the national averages. Standards in reading fell such that the school performed in the lowest 20% nationally. In 2017 in key stage 1, progress and attainment were below the national averages in reading, mathematics and writing.
- The school's information on the 2018 unvalidated results shows some improvement which indicates the beginning of a halt to the decline over the last few years.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information well enough to match work precisely for pupils with differing abilities.
- Because the school lacks meaningful accurate internal assessment information, leaders, including governors, have not been able to identify and tackle important areas of underperformance.
- The curriculum offer is limited by lack of teachers' subject knowledge and skills. Teaching in a range of subjects lacks sufficient quality and depth. This means that pupils do not always build well on prior knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. One effect is that the most able are not enabled to reach the highest standards in reading and particularly writing.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that systems are now in place to hold others to account. However, these are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school serves at the heart of the community and is highly regarded by pupils, parents and carers, and staff alike.
- Pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development is strong and reflects the values and vision of the school.
- The recently appointed interim headteacher has moved very rapidly to accurately identify and address weaknesses. As a result, this is an improving school.
- The provision in the early years foundation stage class is effective. Standards here are above the national averages.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes by making sure that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors:
  - have an accurate and consistent view of the strengths of the school through the increased and improved use of assessment information
  - refine the quality and precision with which they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able
  - ensure high-quality learning across the curriculum to support pupils to make the best possible progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle leadership to ensure that they are highly influential in improving teaching, learning and assessment at all stages in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers accurately assess what pupils know, can do and understand, to match work precisely to pupils' different needs and abilities
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
  - improving the quality of feedback to pupils so that they know how improve their learning
  - ensuring that all teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge to support pupils to make good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Commencing in mid-2017, there has been a period of considerable turbulence at the school. Standards had fallen and governors decided to replace the headteacher. At the beginning of 2018, a part-time interim headteacher was appointed who began a program of rapid improvement. As a result of the changes introduced, standards are now beginning to rise. However, further improvement is required.
- A new interim headteacher was appointed in September 2018. He has worked closely with the part-time interim headteacher and swiftly and accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Working with vigour and passion, he has begun to build on the progress made.
- Many of the systems and processes seen by inspectors are either new or just becoming embedded. For example, teachers' appraisals to reflect targeted pupils and school priorities have just been introduced. Leaders have not yet had time to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies closely enough. This is seen, for example, in weaknesses in checks on the progress of identified pupils who need to catch up quickly. As a result, some groups and individuals are not making the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers. In the case of the most able pupils, they are not reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.
- There is not yet enough meaningful and accurate assessment information. As a result, leaders at all levels, including governors, have not been able to hold teachers to account, identify their strengths and weaknesses, or address these through training. However, the newly appointed interim headteacher has made this area a priority. He is determined to identify and spread good practice.
- Teaching and learning across the school are of variable quality. Often, teachers' subject knowledge limits the delivery of the curriculum, so that not all pupils can make gains. Not all subjects across the curriculum are taught to high standards. For example, writing is not taught consistently well enough to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils with different abilities.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations. Some do not know how to identify and provide challenge, because they do not use assessment strategies to any effect. As a result, they do not know how effective they are as teachers. Leadership has moved to address this through providing challenge and support via performance management and training.
- Although senior leaders have been effective in developing leadership capacity, middle leaders are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable when monitoring to challenge staff and hold them accountable for pupils' progress.
- Leaders communicate and engage with the local community and parents well. The school works at the heart of the community and pupils, staff and parents alike regard it highly.
- Staff share leaders' vision, aims and passion. This has established an inclusive, welcoming and safe haven for pupils, including those who come from disadvantaged

and challenging backgrounds.

- Leaders ensure that staff morale is high. Staff say they feel well supported through ongoing advice and professional training.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. For example, the designated safeguarding lead works closely with all staff to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that attendance remains high, that absences are followed up swiftly, and that any lateness is challenged.
- There have been no exclusions of any kind at the school since before 2014 and behaviour across the school is good. This is because leaders have continued to monitor pupils' behaviour and swiftly taken remedial action where necessary. Both pupils and parents say that bullying is very rare and that actions taken by leaders is effective.
- A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has only recently been appointed. She has prioritised the use of assessment to identify and improve pupils' skills and understanding. It is too soon to see the impact of changes.
- Leaders use the variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures effectively to promote British values. Equality, democracy and tolerance are cornerstones of the school's work which enables pupils to interact and mix well. This helps them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' use of the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has variable impact. Because assessment systems have hitherto not been well developed, the school has only recently become clear about how much progress these groups of pupils make.
- Leaders, including governors, check the use of the physical education and sport premium funding. They use this well to promote different sporting activities, events and clubs. Pupils enjoy sport, and staff encourage them to participate as part of an approach to healthy lifestyles. Some parents told inspectors that they would like to see the school offer more clubs and extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders have a productive partnership with the local authority. The local authority adviser visits the school and understands its context. The local authority has offered valuable support, for example focused training to target school priorities, such as improving the early years provision. Another example is in offering human resources support to the governors. The local authority understands and acts on its role in supporting the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since the previous inspection, there have been major challenges at the school, and governors have taken robust action in order to address these. Governors were concerned about a decline in standards. At the beginning of 2018, an interim executive headteacher was appointed who worked closely with governors and teachers in order to arrest the decline. As a result of concerted action, initiated by governors, standards are now beginning to rise.
- Governors accept that they were previously not able to hold leaders in the school to account because they lacked skills, knowledge and accurate assessment information. However, they now have systems in place, including planned visits, reporting

arrangements and other processes, including appraisal of the headteacher. This provides them with useful first-hand knowledge which they use to make decisions. It is too soon to see the benefits of these changes.

- Governors have been working with determination to improve their skills and knowledge. They have sought and followed advice from the local authority. They have attended an extensive range of training courses, with many more planned. The impact of their work is beginning to increase, as the rise in standards shows. However, governors accept that there is still much work to be done.
- Governors now have a secure understanding of the general strengths and weaknesses of the school. This ensures that they have appropriate priorities in the school development plan, for example to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school, and raising achievement in writing.
- Governors' records and minutes show that they ask an appropriate range of questions about the school's performance and pupils' achievement.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious and diligent in their safeguarding duties. Their records for checking staff, including vetting them before they are appointed, are robust. Training for all staff meets statutory requirements. Staff are knowledgeable and keenly aware of how to respond to pupils and keep them safe in a range of situations.
- Leaders ensure that they deal appropriately and quickly with any concerns about pupils that are reported. Staff liaise effectively with other professional agencies and experts to keep children safe.
- Governors work effectively with leaders to check that safeguarding procedures are robust. This provides a further layer of accountability to ensure that the school's culture and practice place safeguarding at the heart of its work.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. They trust staff and have confidence in them to resolve any issues or concerns they have. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and swiftly dealt with.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Not all teachers have equally high expectations and aspirations of what pupils can achieve from their respective starting points.
- Some tasks do not support the rapid development of important skills, such as reading and writing. Consequently, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of in these areas of learning.
- Teachers across key stages 1 and 2 do not use assessment information to inform the teaching and learning of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have a clear enough picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils. They do not regularly check pupils' understanding within lessons to address any

misconceptions. Opportunities to reshape learning to meet the needs of all pupils are frequently missed.

- Some teachers do not demonstrate the ability to teach to the entire ability range in their class. As a result, many pupils in these year groups, including the most able and disadvantaged, do not make sufficiently good progress from their starting points.
- Not all teachers use feedback effectively to support pupils' understanding of how to improve their work. However, where teaching is effective, feedback is provided effectively and pupils respond clearly with evidence that they have improved their understanding.
- Teaching assistants are often very effective in supporting pupils to develop their understanding but this is not consistent across all year groups.
- Where teaching is effective, learners' needs are identified accurately. In these lessons, teaching addresses the wide range of ability with well-targeted support and timely challenging questioning which deepen pupils' knowledge. Here, pupils are engaged and there are no behavioural issues. However, where teaching is less effective, there can be some low-level disruption which upsets learning for all.
- The curriculum offer is limited. Although curriculum plans are in place, some teachers are not able to teach to them. This is because they lack subject knowledge and knowledge of teaching approaches which engage and stretch all learners.
- The teaching of mathematics is more consistently good across the school. Some examples of strong practice were seen. For example, in a key stage 2 class, the teacher noticed that several pupils were struggling to use protractors to accurately measure angles. The teacher moved swiftly to address misconceptions and, as a result, this group were able to make gains.
- The teaching of writing is of inconsistent quality. Teachers do not make sufficiently clear how to structure writing for different audiences, purposes and types of text. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in key stages 1 and 2. The interim headteacher has implemented a programme of professional development to address this. It is too soon to see the benefits of this training.
- Teaching of phonics is effective in the Reception Year and key stage 1. However, some of the methods and materials used in key stage 1 sometimes did not engage the whole ability range. As a result, some learners, particularly the most able, do not make as much progress as they could.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported to access learning in the classroom and make steady progress. However, this group and the most able and disadvantaged pupils are not always quickly identified and supported as well as they could be.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Work to promote pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.
- Pupils show positive attitudes across a range of contexts, especially when engaged in lessons. They are supportive of each other and interact well when learning together. The school is a calm, happy and orderly environment. Pupils are polite and treat visitors with respect and consideration, for example by holding open a door or asking if they can be of help. They are friendly and gregarious, reflecting the schools' four core values extremely well.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe online. They can also explain how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils talk with great appreciation about the care and support they receive from staff.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the British values of tolerance and respect.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and is a strength of the school.
- Pupils, including the youngest, interact and play well together. Older pupils told inspectors that they saw it as part of their responsibility to help ensure that behaviour is good around the school. As a result, St John's is a happy harmonious place where all pupils can thrive.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. The parents that inspectors spoke to agree.
- There were one or two examples of poor and off-task behaviours noticed in some classes where learning was not sufficiently structured or challenging. However, such instances are rare and quickly dealt with by staff.
- Leaders and members of staff have established a consistent and effective approach to the management of any serious poor behaviour. This approach has resulted in there being no exclusions of any kind since 2014.
- Pupils value their education. Rates of attendance at the school are historically high and above national averages. However, the rates of absenteeism and persistent absence have risen in recent years. Leaders at the school are aware that there is a small group of pupils that shows a high rate of absence. Such absences hinder progress. Leaders take appropriate action when absences are reported.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 were well below the national averages in 2017. In key stage 2 in reading in 2017, standards fell such that the school performed in the lowest 20% nationally. In key stage 1 in 2017, progress and attainment were below the national averages in mathematics, reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils underachieved in writing at key stage 2 and key stage 1 in 2017.
- The most recent data from the school suggests that pupils' performance in both key stages 1 and 2 improved in 2018. Nevertheless, outcomes for pupils require

improvement.

- The work in pupils' exercise books at key stage 1 and key stage 2 shows that pupils do not make good progress in writing, because they seldom have the opportunity to write freely or at length to practise and develop their skills.
- Overall, not enough pupils, including the most able, reach the highest possible standards. Many do not make the progress that they are capable of in reading and writing across the school.
- By contrast, progress and attainment in mathematics by pupils at key stage 2 have been improving since 2015 for all groups, including the most able and disadvantaged. In 2017 in mathematics, the school performed broadly in the top 30% nationally.
- Pupils' mathematics exercise books across the school show that insufficient attention is paid to practical mathematics using concrete apparatus. Similarly, in lessons, inspectors saw some examples where pupils were not able to correctly use instruments to solve problems to tackle mathematical challenges.
- Overall, although stronger, not enough pupils in key stage 2 reach the highest possible standards in mathematics. This is because there is insufficient challenge in the teaching and in the activities, particularly for the most able.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is not consistently effective in supporting them to make good progress. Teachers do not always address misconceptions, provide effective guidance or review pupils' subsequent understanding. Similarly, assessments are not used well enough to identify actual progress made or standards reached. As a result, opportunities to embed gains and set stretching targets for pupils are missed.
- Pupils' skills in the full range of subjects are limited, such as their enquiry, questioning and hypothesising skills. This is because some teachers themselves lack the subject knowledge required to teach these skills. As a result, high-quality cross-curricular learning was seen rarely. This restricts the acquisition and application of skills in new and varied contexts. However, there are successful examples, such as in a key stage 2 class, where pupils were seen using their knowledge to analyse prehistoric cave art and stone-age tool technology. The responses of the pupils showed that they understood that stone-age peoples were in fact sophisticated learners and not 'mere hunter-gatherers'.
- Phonics teaching and learning are consistently effective at key stage 1 and in the Reception Year. This is reflected in the results over time where the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been at or above the nationally expected standard since 2015.
- Inspectors listened to a range of readers. Older readers read accurately using a range of predicting and decoding techniques. In the main, they had reached nationally expected standards. There were few more advanced readers. Younger pupils displayed variable attitudes to reading. Some were less motivated. As a result, some of these learners have not reached the standard that they should be capable of, particularly given that their phonics skills are relatively well developed.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not historically made consistent progress. However, the lead for this area has now begun to address this. The progress of pupils who are targeted because they are at risk of falling behind is variable. Interventions

are effective for some. In other cases, teaching strategies are not matched closely enough or reviewed with sufficient rigour to enable pupils to make the accelerated progress they need to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because assessment systems in the school are not developed well enough to identify and support these groups of pupils.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The bright and stimulating learning environments of the reception classroom, and outdoors, encourage children to be inquisitive and interested in their learning. They cooperate with each and show good levels of concentration. This is because teaching staff take every opportunity to engage children in activities that support their learning.
- Children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from typically low starting points, especially in writing and mathematics. Throughout the year, additional pupils join the school, many with poorly developed social, mathematical and language skills. They are supported well to settle in and make good progress, especially in their personal and social development.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet children's interests and extend their experiences. In particular, staff plan activities which develop the children's imagination. Children choose areas and equipment to use, and they work well with each other.
- Teaching staff are skilled in teaching phonics, and children quickly develop confidence in reading. Children use their phonics knowledge well to develop their early writing skills.
- Children demonstrate good social skills. For example, pupils were enjoying sharing completing jigsaw puzzles, dressing up, and engaging in imaginative and creative play. The effective use of questioning ensures that all children are fully included in such activities. Children have opportunities, for example, to explore and expand on their vocabulary, using words such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'under' and 'next to'.
- Children behave well and show care for each other. They are safe because staff supervise them well and know when to provide close support or observe from a distance. Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective and meet requirements.
- The leadership of the early years is good. Additional support and training offered by the local authority has been effective in helping to drive up standards. For example, the proportion of children reaching nationally expected standards is now above average. Leaders deploy staff and resources appropriately and ensure that children's progress in each aspect of their learning is recorded and shared with parents. Although children make good progress, more parents could be involved fully so that their children make even more progress, and reach higher standards.

## School details

Unique reference number

100831

Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10056706

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father John Walker
Interim headteacher	Matthew Billson
Telephone number	020 7703 4920
Website	<a href="http://www.stjohnswalworth.southwark.sch.uk">www.stjohnswalworth.southwark.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stjohnswalworth.southwark.sch.uk">office@stjohnswalworth.southwark.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2009

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- This is a Church of England voluntary aided school which received a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) on 18 November 2014 under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The Reception class provides full-time early years education.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, including some joint observations with school leaders. They also spent time looking through pupils' books

and listening to children read.

- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, and with representatives from the local authority. Discussions were also held with senior and middle leaders, and members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents before the school day.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, as well as other conversations with pupils in school and on the playground.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. Inspectors also examined the school's record of checks on the quality of teaching.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Roberts, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Barbara Breed

Ofsted Inspector

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