

Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mark's CofE Primary School

Sussex Way, Islington, London N19 4JF

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils develop and flourish in a supportive environment. The school skilfully helps pupils to overcome any barriers or challenges to learning that pupils face. Pupils become confident and resilient learners. They thrive here and achieve highly by the end of Year 6.

The school has high aspirations for pupils. It puts in place well-thought-out processes to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and ensures that provision to meet their needs is effective.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in class and as they move around the school. They show respect for each other and adults. Pupils are confident that staff deal with any unkindness fairly and swiftly.

The school arranges a wide range of outings, such as to museums. These experiences bring the curriculum to life for pupils and help them to deepen their understanding. Many pupils follow their interests at extra-curricular clubs. They develop their teamwork and resilience by taking part in sporting events.

Staff are patient and caring, dedicated to realising the potential of pupils to succeed. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work and are rightly confident that their children are safe and well cared for.

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

Leaders ensure ambitious programmes for learning are relevant and dynamic for pupils. Teachers use the high-quality resources to plan lessons that build effectively on pupils'

previous learning. This ensures pupils successfully acquire the knowledge and skills they need to 'remember more'. The school prioritises the development of rich vocabulary for pupils. This helps pupils to describe and explain their ideas confidently. In the wider curriculum subjects, checks by teachers ensure that pupils grasp key knowledge before moving to the next unit of work. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to link their learning securely across subjects. For example, in a science experiment, younger pupils use the measurement skills they learn in mathematics when recording the height of plants.

Staff in the early years get to know children exceptionally well from the start and use this knowledge to adjust the curriculum carefully to capture and follow children's interests. As a result, children are highly engaged and sustain their concentration. This means they gain the knowledge and basic skills they need in early reading and mathematics. Established routines help younger children develop positive social skills.

The school helps children to quickly gain the phonics skills and fluency necessary to read books. Prompt support ensures pupils who are at risk of falling behind catch up quickly. Books are accurately matched to the sounds pupils are learning. As a result, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in phonics in 2024 was higher than the previous year. Older pupils discuss their favourite authors enthusiastically. Most pupils learn to read accurately, fluently and with great enjoyment.

Pupils, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are highly motivated and achieve extremely well. Their needs are quickly identified. Highly skilled staff modify and adapt the curriculum effectively. They plan work that enables pupils to build on solid foundations.

The school integrates fundamental British values into its daily life. For example, pupils vote democratically to change house colours. They can apply to take part in a wide range of leadership opportunities. For example, the junior leadership team helps influence school life for the better. They recently changed the school meal menu so it includes healthier options. Pupils take delight in growing and nurturing plants in the school garden. They develop a sense of wonder as they watch nature unfold as well as learning valuable gardening skills.

The school regularly reviews attendance information and identifies patterns of pupil absence. The school invests in providing the right support for identified families. This means there has been an improvement in attendance rates compared with this time last year. However, the school is not complacent and continually looks at how best to support families to bring their children to school even more regularly. For example, the school invites parents into school to show them what their children are learning. These sessions are well attended.

The governing body shares leaders' high aspirations for pupils. It offers effective challenge and support to senior leaders. As a result, the governing body has a thorough understanding of how well the school is doing. Staff feel well supported and appreciate

that leaders consider their workload before any changes are made in school. The school is a cooperative and supportive community. Staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 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 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	100444
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10345648
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Sheehan
Executive Headteacher	Martha Braithwaite
Head of School	Sean McEleney
Website	www.st-marks.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The executive headteacher oversees this school and one other local primary school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

- The inspector observed lessons, interviewed pupils about their learning and examined their work samples.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school and special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector also met with teachers and other staff.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held telephone consultations with representatives from both the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including their written comments.

Inspection team

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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