

Inspection of a good school: St John's Upper Holloway C of E Primary School

Pemberton Gardens, Upper Holloway, London N19 5RR

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 June 2022

Outcome

St John's Upper Holloway C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's is a small friendly school with the community at its heart. Parents hold the school in high regard. One parent's comment, typical of many, was that they chose the school because leaders 'foster an environment of being kind and caring'.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils' academic achievement and behaviour. They meet the needs of all pupils well, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their best in lessons and behave well. They listen carefully to each other and are keen to build on, agree or challenge what others contribute.

Pupils are safe. They are welcoming and polite to visitors. Bullying is rare. Pupils generally feel, as one said, 'We are too kind for that!' Pupils say staff and their friends would quickly notice if they were upset. They can name an adult they would choose to speak to if they were worried.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility roles, for example helping younger pupils in the dinner hall, sharing ideas at Eco Club, or representing the views of their class at school council meetings.

Pupils' experiences are enriched beyond the curriculum. Pupils have regular opportunities to perform and watch performances. For example, Year 4 pupils are currently taking part in a Shakespeare project with two other schools. Leaders regularly organise inspiring visitors to bring the curriculum to life. These visits help pupils to learn about the world beyond their school, such as wild animal conservation.

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

Leaders have clear expectations for what children should learn from the early years to Year 6. They have recently reviewed and developed the curriculum to ensure that all pupils achieve well. It is rich and broad, matching the ambition of the national curriculum. Pupils study subjects that develop oracy and promote diversity, and physical and mental health. This is preparing pupils well for later life.

Most leaders have planned the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. In these subjects, it is logically sequenced so pupils can build on what they already know and remember. Pupils are confident at discussing key events and facts. Teachers make sure their instructions and explanations are clear. They regularly review previous learning to help pupils remember the facts they have learned. Teachers address gaps in knowledge and misconceptions in the moment. They encourage pupils to think deeply, for example by exploring the difference between fact and opinion.

In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the subject-specific skills they want pupils to develop over time. This means that pupils sometimes struggle to apply their knowledge to more complex ideas.

The early years is engaging, purposeful and fun. Two-year-olds have their own space but are also well integrated into the wider provision. Adults foster independence. They use interactions well to explore and extend pupils learning. Children squealed with wonder as they explored real sea creatures linked to their wider learning.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Staff enable pupils with SEND to build on what they already know and achieve the same as their peers. Leaders make effective use of external expertise to ensure pupils receive the support they need.

Pupils learning to read is very important at St John's. Reading is promoted through a range of creative events such as reading picnics and teacher story swap. Pupils are developing their love of books and can name favourite stories and authors. Leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme recently. All staff are well trained and teach in a consistent, structured way to help pupils build their comprehension skills and develop fluency. Pupils who fall behind are identified and supported to catch up.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and typically approach challenging tasks with a positive attitude. Pupils are keen to learn more, and lessons proceed uninterrupted. Pupils are taught about respecting everyone and their differences, sharing the view that everyone is treated equally.

Leaders' actions bring about improvements. This includes addressing the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. Leaders work closely with families to support pupils to overcome barriers to their learning, including those pupils who need to improve their attendance.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel part of a close-knit team and appreciate the support offered by leaders. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and have taken positive steps to help with this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know children and their families extremely well. They understand the types of risks children may face and staff are vigilant.

Leaders make sure staff receive regular training and updates. Staff are clear about their recording and reporting responsibilities if they have any concerns.

Leaders are knowledgeable and persistent. They work effectively with external agencies to provide the help pupils need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the specific skills they want pupils to learn within units of work. This has resulted in pupils having gaps in their learning. Leaders should define these skills more sharply so that pupils can apply their knowledge to more complex ideas.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

How can I feedback 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100439
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10211103
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	226
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Sue Hallem
Headteacher	Brian Welsh
Website	www.stjohnsupperholloway.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a provision for two-year-olds and a nursery.
- The school has a Church of England ethos. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector also met with governors and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority and the London Board of Diocesan Schools.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning, spoke to teachers and

looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered. For these subjects, the inspector looked at a sample of pupils' work and spoke to subject leaders about the curriculum.

- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the safeguarding arrangements at the school and reviewed safeguarding records and documentation. The single central record of staff suitability checks was also scrutinised.
- The inspector considered the survey responses from parents, staff and pupils as well as emails sent to the headteacher.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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