

St Mary's Walthamstow CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Brooke Road, Walthamstow, London E17 9HJ

Inspection dates	8–9 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The exceptional leadership from the executive headteacher, her head of school and team of leaders sets expectations for all staff to ensure their pupils thrive. As a result, pupils, including the most able, make outstanding progress.
- Governors are passionate and systematic in their approach when performing their statutory duties. They accurately challenge school leaders. The slightest variation in school performance is scrutinised. Governors have a sharp focus on the well-being and safety of pupils through promoting the school's Christian ethos.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding because of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. All teachers plan with diligence. They use their deep subject knowledge and understanding of each pupil to provide rapid support and intervention to help all pupils learn extremely well.
- Children in the early years, supported by strong leadership, access a high-quality, stimulating environment targeted to their needs. Children share their enthusiasm to explore and develop learning. Children's achievement by the end of the early years is above average.
- All pupils make rapid and sustained progress, including disadvantaged pupils, those with disability and those with special educational needs. They read widely and often, and articulate their knowledge well.
- The broad and balanced curriculum strongly meets the needs of all pupils. The federation values provide a deep emphasis on developing pupils' religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Extra-curricular activities encourage pupils' self-esteem and provide highly effective links with parents.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils is exemplary. Inspectors observed consistently high expectations of behaviour from staff and pupils alike. Pupils are polite, respectful, tolerant and friendly towards each other, their teachers and visitors. They have excellent attitudes and talk enthusiastically about their learning. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school. Attendance is high and exclusions rare.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff undertake regular and effective safeguarding training. As a result, they know how to identify risk and promote the safety of all pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the highly effective leadership at all levels, so all staff extend the rapid and sustained progress pupils make.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The executive headteacher and her leadership team provide exceptional leadership. Leaders across the school are uncompromising in their high expectations of staff. As a result, teachers ensure they maintain the highest conduct and expectations of themselves and their pupils. All staff have an insightful knowledge of the progress pupils make.
- Leaders are thorough and accurate in their evaluations of the school. They carefully review all aspects of the school's development to focus on the highest outcomes for pupils. Leaders use a systematic approach to challenge any variation in performance. The head of school and middle leaders report regularly to the governing body. Therefore, staff performance is carefully scrutinised.
- Staff are carefully supported through a highly effective coaching and mentoring programme. Middle leaders understand their roles exceptionally well. They provide consistent development and support for newly qualified and early career teachers. Furthermore, they are able to regularly share expertise and evaluate their teaching. All staff have an allocated coach.
- Middle leaders participate in a range of professional courses. It is an expectation that they actively disseminate their knowledge and understanding to their colleagues across the federation. Therefore, strong professional links exist to secure improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, for those new to the school.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment with highly diligent scrutiny. All leaders regularly observe teaching, often accompanied by senior leaders from the federation to analyse their evaluations. Leaders provide detailed feedback to teachers on their performance and set agreed and challenging targets. They are thorough and accurate in their assessment of teachers. This enables the performance management of teachers to be seamless with ongoing monitoring to reward effective teaching. Performance targets for teachers are based on the expectation for all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum strongly meets the needs of all pupils. Mathematics and literacy are taught daily. Class topics link to the wider national curriculum subjects, including information and communication technology, art, music and science. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities support the curriculum; these include, among others, fencing, film, Latin, coding, sport, homework and phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). Sporting, cultural and artistic activities develop diversity, understanding of right and wrong, tolerance, and respect for others.
- The federation's Christian values provide a deep emphasis on developing pupils' religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils are confident when talking about wisdom, respect, forgiveness and spirituality. They regularly reflect on their own and others' beliefs. For example, the school has a spirituality day and pupils visit places of worship from different religions. Pupils from the school council told inspectors about their knowledge of life in modern Britain, particularly democracy, liberty and the rule of law. The school council is proud of the role it plays in the life of the school.
- Pupil premium funding is used extremely effectively. The school provides many activities and interventions to ensure disadvantaged pupils achieve very well. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are carefully tracked and make sustained progress similar to their peers in all key stages, and others nationally. The primary sport premium for physical education (PE) is used equally effectively. Leaders promote pupils' enjoyment in sport through a balance of PE curriculum teaching and sporting taster activities. Activities are well evaluated to ensure they have a positive impact on the standards and interests of pupils and their participation in sport.
- Leaders and managers have created a culture where the needs of pupils and staff are met effectively. Displays are vibrant and colourful. They promote the care, safety and well-being of the school community and raise aspirations and expectations of staff and pupils. All pupils across the school and children in the early years access a high-quality, stimulating environment targeted to their needs. As a result, the school atmosphere is calm and supportive. Parents told inspectors about the positive relationships between themselves and the school. A very high proportion of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, are confident their children are taught well, and say the school is a safe place. Almost all would recommend the school. Staff say that they value the sense of community and take enormous pride in their work and that of pupils.
- Leaders and governors undertake all appropriate recruitment checks on staff, and record information well.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors of the school are passionate and systematic in their approach when performing their statutory duties. They accurately challenge leaders of the school and the slightest variation in school performance is scrutinised. Records of meetings of the governing body are impressively recorded with all individual questions asked and actions identified. Consequently, governors are very well informed of any developments and are fully aware of the school's performance.
 - Governors attend regular training supported by the local authority and colleagues across the federation. The expertise of governors is evaluated regularly to support the needs of the committees of the governing body. All governors visit the school regularly to scrutinise the performance of their area of responsibility. Governors take an active role in the strategic direction of the school, including aspects of performance management, safeguarding and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The governor responsible for safeguarding has a thorough knowledge of work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Governors are particularly keen to provide a sharp focus on fundamental British values. All governors have completed safeguarding training. They are very aware of the appropriate statutory recruitment checks for new staff. Furthermore, the governing body ensures that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are regularly reviewed. Safeguarding records held by the school are comprehensive and appropriately stored. Staff are trained effectively to identify when pupils may be at risk of neglect, abuse, child exploitation and extremism or radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Pupils progress rapidly across all key stages because of the high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. All teachers plan with diligence. Teachers meticulously follow the school's 'flip chart' planning expectation. They use their deep subject knowledge and understanding of each pupil to help them learn extremely well. Similarly consistent expectations exist in the early years, where children progress strongly and develop their social, communication and language skills rapidly.
- Leaders' high expectations ensure teachers consistently use and apply the school's assessment policy. Teachers use a wide range of assessment information about their pupils when evaluating the progress made in their learning. As a result, they ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is highly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers use regular and meaningful homework to consolidate learning. Furthermore, holiday projects promote the pupils' interest and provide challenge to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well through highly effective opportunities to problem-solve and explore their learning independently. As a result, pupils quickly acquire the skills of procedural fluency, and mastery in developing their understanding. Furthermore, they are encouraged to reflect on previous learning and evaluate their own progress. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were able to refer to models of calculation studied previously and apply these effectively to supplement their own knowledge, when accurately interpreting graphical information.
- All teachers have high expectations. They focus their assessment on extending the sustained progress of individual pupils, through clear targets to develop grammar and written feedback. As a result, pupils attain at or above their age-related expectations. Where any pupil's progress varies, teachers and support assistants intervene quickly and effectively. Therefore, the needs of pupils are understood and successfully met, including pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with disability and those with special educational needs. The most-able pupils are successfully challenged to explore concepts before moving on in their learning.
- Teachers regularly stress the importance of literacy and numeracy skills in deepening learning. Consequently, pupils were observed in many lessons challenging themselves and consolidating their learning. Pupils understand very well what is expected of them in all lessons. They say they enjoy reading and understand how phonics skills help them to read new words.
- An exceptional feature of the outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment is the valuable contribution made by all adults, including teaching assistants, and those parents and volunteers who attend and support extra-curricular learning. Inspectors observed particularly successful sessions for pupils in phonics after school, and when parents supported children in the early years 'learning challenge'. Strong and effective relationships are encouraged between parents, their children and the school community.

- An overwhelming proportion of parents and staff share the view that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is exceptional. Almost all parents and staff say that pupils are taught well, and make good or better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Christian values permeate the life of the school. All pupils share the motto 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. Consequently, they display excellent attitudes to learning, leading to effective attainment and progress.
- Effective systems are in place to support the transition of pupils from key stage 2 to key stage 3. A group of Year 6 pupils told inspectors that they were excited about moving to their new school and that their teachers would support them for when they leave. Children in the early years are supervised with vigilance from when they start the Reception Year. Parents actively support their children's early learning in partnership with the class teacher. As a result, any child who disengages is carefully and appropriately supported back to focus on their learning and progress.
- All pupils have a good appreciation of what constitutes being healthy. They are supported to make appropriate choices to become and remain healthy. The school provides wide opportunities for pupils to participate in activities which promote healthy lifestyles, particularly with the sport premium.
- Pupils from the school council shared their ambitions for the future with inspectors. They were aspirational and non-stereotypical in their career ideas. Furthermore, they understand that the school council has a strong voice in supporting the welfare and development of their peers.
- The school cares for vulnerable pupils especially well. It engages fully with appropriate external support when necessary. Upset or lonely pupils are rare. Pupils told inspectors that their 'school is fantastic and no changes need to be made'. They feel the school is a safe place and recognise the value of regular safety advice provided to them.
- A significantly high proportion of parents who spoke with inspectors or responded to the online survey, Parent View, confirmed the views of pupils. Almost all reported that they would recommend the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Inspectors observed consistently high expectations of behaviour from staff and pupils alike. Pupils are polite, respectful, tolerant and friendly towards each other, their teachers and visitors. Any low-level disruption is rare. Pupils' behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils told inspectors that there is no evidence of bullying and teachers quickly resolve any minor issues.
- During unstructured time, pupils play well together. A wide variety of activities is on offer to promote good behaviours and peer relationships. For example, a 'buddy stop' is used for any pupil who wishes to play with his or her peers, but cannot identify anyone, and a quiet reading zone allows reflection space.
- Pupils take responsibility for maintaining their behaviour. The learning council has been involved in developing the school's behaviour policy and the school council has a regular anti-bullying campaign. Furthermore, an effective system of rewards and sanctions is popular with pupils.
- Teaching staff have encourage all pupils to take pride in their work and the environment. As a result, books are well presented and cared for by pupils. Displays are colourful, vibrant and outstandingly maintained. The school has an environment that stimulates learning and promotes the values of the school. Consequently, behaviour is a strength of the school.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Very few pupils fail to attend regularly and exclusions are rare. They enthusiastically told inspectors that their peers behave well, and 'the school helps them live lives as good people, and differences do not matter'.
- Pupils reported that they know how to keep themselves safe and topics such as e-safety, the risks from strangers, and road safety are included in their lessons.
- Parents hold an almost unanimous view regarding the behaviour of pupils. Almost all who completed the online survey Parent View say pupils are well behaved. They told inspectors that any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively when concerns are raised.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- High-quality provision in the early years means all children are well prepared to start their next stage of learning. In 2015, by the end of Year 1 the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above average. This trend continued in Year 2, where all pupils attained results above the national average in all subjects.
- In 2015, the rate of progress of all pupils in key stage 2 was significantly better than average. A high proportion of pupils achieved better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Current school assessment information confirms that a high proportion of children in the Reception Year are already making fast progress, so that they catch up and in some cases overtake their peers nationally. All pupils across key stage 1 and key stage 2 are making progress beyond that expected. A continued trend of improved attainment is expected for pupils at the end of Year 6.
- In 2015, the progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with disability and those with special educational needs was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. A similar trend exists for current pupils across the school. All pupils make rapid and sustained progress, including those who are disadvantaged, the most able, and those with special educational needs or disability.
- The most-able pupils deepen their understanding through work across the curriculum. In mathematics, they develop the application of problem solving and abstract concepts. For example, the most-able pupils regularly consider different methods to explore their answers. Consequently, a high proportion of these pupils in all year groups make better than expected progress.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils who read to inspectors were enthusiastic about reading. They were able to read with fluency and sound out letters to read words. The most-able pupils were confident using phonics to read aloud unknown words. Sustained efforts by the school to develop the use of phonics and raise the expectations of pupils to read at home has been successful. Consequently, a high majority of pupils read with confidence and carefully articulate their knowledge and understanding of text.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter the Reception Year with a level of skills, knowledge and understanding generally below that expected for their age. However, they soon make rapid progress in all areas of their learning.
- Progress in the early years has shown a rising trend over time with more than three quarters of children consistently achieving above the national expectations of a good level of development.
- Analysis of the school's own assessment information confirms that rates of progress for all children in the early years have continued to improve. Well over three quarters of all children are meeting and exceeding their age-related expectations before Year 1, and of these many have made rapid progress since the start of the academic year.
- The school uses highly successful strategies to engage in partnerships with parents. The 'learning journey' books encourage parents to visit the school, and review the progress of their child. Inspectors observed parents working alongside children during the 'learning challenge' to deepen the knowledge and understanding of children. Phonics workshops provide parents with techniques to develop the skills to help develop reading. Consequently, children quickly grasp the concepts of reading.
- Children develop the concepts of number through effective resources. For example, an area is set aside to allow children to explore methods of calculation and apply their counting skills. Inspectors observed children in Reception developing effective literacy skills through writing a letter to 'Mr Troll'. The children were highly enthused and rarely disengaged as they experienced all areas of learning.
- Disadvantaged children, and those with special educational needs or disability, make strong progress in the early years. All children develop effective social skills through listening and speaking with adults guiding them appropriately in a range of activities. As a result, attainment by the end of the early years is above average. Children access a high-quality, stimulating environment targeted to their needs. Therefore, they share their enthusiasm to explore and develop learning. Children spoke to inspectors with confidence, demonstrated good listening skills and behaved politely.
- Leadership of the early years provision is excellent. Children are assessed accurately through appropriate questioning, observation and evaluation of their work. Their progress is carefully checked and recorded. Furthermore, strong support from adults and an excellent outdoor learning environment promote physical development, communication and literacy in a safe space. Consequently, the early years provision is outstanding.

School details

Unique reference number	103092
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10008692

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laurence Jones
Executive headteacher	Beverley Hall
Head of school	Faye Rider
Telephone number	0208 521 1066
Website	http://www.stmaryscofe.org/
Email address	school@st-marys-coe.waltham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- In September 2011, the school entered a hard federation with St Saviour's Church of England Primary School. The schools have one governing body and an executive headteacher. They also share senior and middle leaders.
- Three quarters of all pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with a higher than average proportion speaking English as an additional language. However, most pupils speak fluently and few are at the early stages of learning English.
- Less than one fifth of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is lower than average. The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school is part of a teacher training partnership with a local university. The executive headteacher also provides training for teachers and schools within the federation, and the local authority.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 43 part-lessons, many jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also attended an assembly and a learning challenge session, and spoke with parents.
- Inspectors discussed lessons that were jointly visited with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and associate headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a range of staff, including newly qualified teachers, and they listened to pupils read. Discussions also took place with the chair of the governing body and two other governors, the school council, the pupil learning council, and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the work of pupils, records relating to their behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation, and records relating to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the performance of teachers. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including the single central record of recruitment checks made on staff.
- Inspectors took into account 51 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and questionnaires completed by 27 members of staff and 34 pupils. The inspectors also took account of a letter received from a parent during the inspection.

Inspection team

John Lambern, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Christopher Birtles	Ofsted Inspector
Olivia Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Rigby	Ofsted Inspector

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