

Inspection of Ben Jonson Primary School

Harford Street, Stepney, London E1 4PZ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have developed an inclusive and welcoming culture. Working relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Staff know all pupils very well which ensures that they are safe and well supported.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Leaders have carefully crafted a character programme to develop the necessary life skills to enable pupils to be successful. Pupils contribute to the positive culture in the school. They are hardworking, happy and kind to each other and adults.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils receive effective support during lessons by both teachers and highly skilled support staff.

Leaders have created a calm and orderly environment. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary during lessons and around the school site.

Pupils in the school take part in an extremely broad range of wider opportunities. These include a variety of sports and music groups, debating and chess clubs. Pupils can also write for the school's reading newsletter, which includes reviews of books they have read. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. These include the school council, peer mediators and librarians.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious and in line with the expectations of the national curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' knowledge over time progressively. In early years, there is a focus on ensuring children develop a wide vocabulary and learn to communicate effectively.

Leaders prioritise the health and well-being of staff. They ensure the professional development of all members of staff is supported through high-quality training opportunities. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. Staff make adaptations for pupils SEND skilfully. This helps these pupils access an ambitious curriculum successfully. Staff ensure that the individual needs of pupils are carefully considered. They reflect on their practice to ensure that support for pupils has the desired impact. In early years, staff are knowledgeable about the areas of learning they teach.

Sometimes, teaching does not identify and clarify pupils' misunderstandings systematically. This means that occasionally misconceptions are not addressed so that pupils are fully ready for new learning. In early years, staff regularly check and develop children's use of language and vocabulary.

There is a strong focus on reading from when pupils start Reception. Pupils' results in national outcomes for phonics in Year 1 and reading at the end of Year 6 were

low in 2023. Several new strategies have been put in place to improve pupils' reading fluency and confidence. The impact of these new systems on pupils' knowledge and understanding in the school is effective and making a positive difference. For instance, all staff in the school are well trained in the phonics programme and consistent in its delivery. Staff identify any pupils who fall behind the pace of the programme swiftly. Staff provide bespoke support for these pupils to ensure that they learn to decode and blend phonic sounds confidently. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' passion for reading. Pupils read a wide variety of books daily.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are highly focused during lessons. In early years, staff motivate children. They support children to share and co-operate well with each other. Leaders have robust procedures and strategies in place to support pupils to have high attendance. They communicate effectively with parents and carers to ensure pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have developed an exceptionally thorough personal development programme that is rooted in the school values. Pupils have an in depth understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Leaders have designed a highly effective careers programme. This includes outings to a range of workplaces and visits from a variety of employers. Staff also plan a range of other outings for pupils that help to develop their learning. These include visits to museums, galleries and musical performances.

Leaders have built very strong relationships with parents and the local community. There are a wide range of parental workshops on themes including online safety, reading and supporting pupils with particular needs.

The governing body understands the strengths and priorities of the school and carries out its role effectively. It has a clear strategic vision and provides appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teaching does not systematically identify and clarify pupils' misunderstandings. This means that sometimes pupils have gaps in their understanding. The school should develop the expertise of all teachers so that they address any misconceptions that pupils have so that they are fully ready for new content.

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	100890
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10307703
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	643
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dharmendra Nair
Headteacher	Norma Marshall
Website	www.benjonson.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	31 October and 1 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an integrated specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. There is currently one pupil who uses this provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff. They also met with members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Conway, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Hatchett	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Vincent	His Majesty's Inspector
Eleanor Ross	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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