

Inspection of a good school: The St Marylebone Church of England Bridge School

17–23 Third Avenue, London W10 4RS

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

The St Marylebone Church of England Bridge School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like this school. It is a calm and caring place. Skilled staff, including speech therapists, work closely together to provide support that helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to grow in confidence and succeed outside of school.

Pupils behave well most of the time because they are eager to learn. Where I saw pupils given time to work on their own or with their peers, they did so very well. One pupil told me that the school was ‘thrilling’. Another said, ‘I wasn’t very good at reading until I practised at breaktimes.’ This enthusiasm is shared by other pupils, including those who have had a bad experience of education in the past. Pupils said they do not worry about being bullied in school because teachers are always quick to deal with any problems.

Lessons are usually lively and fun, and most teachers think carefully about how to support all pupils. Pupils achieve particularly well in English, mathematics and computing. However, sometimes, teachers’ expectations are not as ambitious in other subjects. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Pupils are encouraged to consider the views and beliefs of others. This has recently included thinking about how quotations from religious texts relate to life in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of one another and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Parents and carers are welcomed into the school community, and typically said that they feel listened to and respected.

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

Teaching in some subjects is better than in others. It is clear from the subject plans what it is that pupils need to know and understand. Pupils learn what leaders expect them to know, when they need to know it. Because of this, teachers and teaching assistants know

how they can help pupils to learn more and remember more. Pupils achieve well overall. They achieve very well in English, mathematics and computing, and are successful in entry level and GCSE qualifications. In some other subjects, teachers do not present subject matter as clearly or create an equally ambitious environment that focuses on pupils' learning.

Teachers use resources skilfully to help pupils to understand new subject content. Pupils' workbooks are neat and carefully presented. Pupils look back at the work they have done and correct their own mistakes. This helps them to build their knowledge, remember what they have learned before and learn more in the next lesson. Some pupils set themselves targets related to what helps them to learn best.

All pupils usually get the extra help they need. This includes horse-riding for pupils who are anxious about communicating with other people. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have access to the same opportunities as their peers. For example, leaders make sure that all pupils join outings to the seaside and residential visits. Teachers understand the challenges faced by pupils with SEND. They have adapted the curriculum to suit all pupils' needs. This helps these pupils to know more and remember more.

The importance of reading is highlighted throughout the school. Pupils read regularly and have access to books that excite them. As a result, they develop a love of reading that encourages them to practise often and helps them to read fluently and understand what they are reading.

Teachers, teaching assistants and therapists plan together to make sure that support for pupils is consistent throughout the school. This is especially true with communication and reading strategies. Staff become more skilled over time because they make good use of training from specialist therapists. As a result, pupils are well supported to be successful in all aspects of their lives.

Pupils learn how their disability affects different aspects of their lives, including how they think, behave and feel. They are helped to find ways to overcome any barriers. This includes using technology to read things out or to speak for them.

Pupils behave well and show great respect towards adults and to one another. They are taught to think about how others might be feeling before responding when people get upset. As a result, lessons run smoothly.

The school's community is caring. Older pupils are encouraged to contribute through community service and support younger pupils. Former pupils return to the school to talk about and share their experiences. Everyone looks out for each another here. Pupils and staff feel well supported and free from bullying or harassment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils, staff and parents all told me that this is a safe place to be. They trust staff to help them to sort out any problems they may have.

Staff are well trained to spot potential signs of neglect or abuse, and fully understand how to keep children safe. When concerns are reported, leaders act immediately and work well with the local authority and other agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils have daily opportunities to talk about their problems and things they might see in the news. The designated lead for safeguarding works with a variety of organisations, such as the local police, to help educate pupils about the risks they may face beyond the school gate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject planning and teaching are variable between subjects. Leaders are aware of this. They should continue their work to ensure that the improvements seen in curriculum design and teaching in English, mathematics and computing are matched in all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers are particularly ambitious for pupils in English, mathematics and computing. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are equally ambitious for all pupils in all subjects.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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	139600
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10107648
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Mountford
Headteacher	Kate Miller
Website	www.stmarylebonebridgeschool.com
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is a special school that specialises in speech, language and communication needs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, we held a number of meetings with governors, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders.
- In order to test the quality of education, we considered English, mathematics and computing. For each of these subjects, we met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. We also looked at pupils' work in books.
- I looked at safeguarding documentation, including the school's written records. We also held meetings to discuss attendance, gaming, off-rolling and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspection took into consideration 22 responses to the survey for staff and the 12 responses to the online survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

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