

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The St Marylebone Church of England Bridge School

Herries Street, London W10 4LE

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 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?

The St Marylebone Church of England Bridge School is a place where pupils thrive. Staff know pupils well and are expert at supporting them to be successful and overcome their varying challenges. Pupils are happy and kept safe. They value the many opportunities they are given to develop their independence, such as visits to the seaside and residential trips.

The school has high expectations for pupils to be as independent as possible, to achieve highly and to conduct themselves maturely. Pupils earn certificates and rewards because they meet these expectations. This means they, rightly, feel very proud of their achievements.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are respectful, friendly and kind towards each other and staff, and welcoming to visitors. In lessons, pupils demonstrate curiosity and highly positive attitudes to their learning.

The school ensures that pupils are given excellent support and advice to help them make decisions about their future. This is through a very well-structured careers advice programme, which includes guest speakers, practice interviews, work experience and visits to careers fairs and colleges.

Pupils learn how to advocate for themselves. For example, they are taught the skills to explain their learning difficulties to others and ask questions to clarify meaning with confidence.

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

The school provides pupils with a highly ambitious, broad and very well-considered curriculum. It ensures that pupils have access to all the subjects outlined in the national curriculum and more. Each subject is designed sequentially, enabling pupils to build increasingly complex knowledge on strong foundations. For example, in mathematics, pupils secure knowledge about the number of degrees in a right angle and along a straight line before calculating missing angles.

Pupils develop a rich, connected body of knowledge that prepares them extremely well for their next steps. This is because teaching across the curriculum is highly consistent. It supports pupils' additional needs through, for example, reinforcing vocabulary and developing communication and reading skills across different subjects. Teachers are knowledgeable and present information clearly. The curriculum ensures that teachers use activities that enable pupils to practise and apply new knowledge, skills and vocabulary so they can remember these over time. Teachers systematically check how well pupils understand what is being taught and correct pupils' misconceptions as they occur.

Pupils are given time to learn specific skills that are key to meeting the targets outlined in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. The school ensures that this is achieved through a high-quality blend of therapeutic and teaching approaches that are tailored very closely to pupils' individual needs. The school incorporates advice from Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists to provide ongoing review of pupils' needs. This includes setting accurate targets around cognition and learning, speech and language, social and emotional health, and preparation for adulthood. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident learners who take pride in their achievements.

The school identifies those pupils who need additional help with their reading. A well-implemented phonics programme supports these pupils to catch up. Consequently, pupils' reading becomes more fluent and accurate over time.

The school has secured improvements in attendance. To do this, leaders have analysed attendance data and worked with parents and carers, pupils and relevant agencies to help identify and overcome any barriers pupils may have to attending school.

The school's provision for pupils' broader development is exceptional. Pupils are taught how to be physically and emotionally healthy and how to stay safe when online and in the community. Pupils develop their leadership and social skills when they participate in community projects, raise money for charity and learn to travel independently. The school supports pupils to develop their talents and interests through a huge array of clubs, visits and workshops. These include clubs for origami, sewing, art, music and numerous sports, and visits to the theatre, cinema, galleries and museums.

Leaders are highly effective and prioritise continuous improvement, making decisions in the best interests of pupils. Staff are very positive about their training and development

and feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. Parents are equally appreciative about the way they are kept informed through the workshops and other help the school provides.

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 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 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	139600
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10345959
Type of school	Special
School category	Free School Special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alistair Watson
Headteacher	Kate Miller
Website	www.stmarylebonebridgeschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a special school that specialises in speech, language and communication needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. 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 school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, executive headteacher and other members of the governing body, including the chair. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, met with pupils and looked at samples of their work. They also observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered documentation related to the curriculum and assessment, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' EHC plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The views of pupils and staff were considered through discussions, as well as their responses to the online surveys. Parents' views were considered through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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