

Inspection of John Donne Primary School

Woods Road, London SE15 2SW

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jo Rooney. This school is part of Nexus Education Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paula Farrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Golding.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning at this school. From the early years onwards, classrooms are settled, purposeful places where pupils listen attentively, work well together and try hard at their learning. Adults develop warm and respectful professional relationships with pupils, which encourages them to report any concerns. Roles such as digital leaders and membership of the school council provide opportunities for pupils to take up responsibility.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils will achieve through the curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They expect all pupils to learn the full curriculum, which is broad and interesting. For example, pupils perform their own poetry, learn outdoors in the school's open-air kitchen and are taught Spanish cultural heritage when studying the language.

Beyond the academic curriculum, leaders ensure that a wide range of 'memorable experiences' develop pupils' knowledge and experience of the world. Residential stays in Years 5 and 6 are a particular highlight, giving pupils new encounters that build on previous learning. For example, pupils gain experience of bee-keeping during a farm stay in Year 5, which further develops their understanding about pollination gained during a Year 4 outing to Kew Gardens.

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

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully sequenced to develop pupils' knowledge in a logical order over time. The curriculum for younger pupils focuses on rehearsing key knowledge to help pupils to remember it. For example, in the early years, children rehearse number facts so that they do not make mistakes when attempting more complicated tasks later. Older pupils are typically supported to recall what they have learned previously. However, in a few areas of the curriculum where curriculum thinking is newer, teaching focuses less rigorously on helping pupils to build and recall knowledge, including important concepts, fluently and accurately.

Leaders emphasise developing pupils' vocabulary because they have identified this to be an area where pupils typically have low starting points. Teachers focus on giving clear definitions and helping pupils to pronounce and use new words accurately. Consequently, pupils acquire a range of new language that supports them to talk in detail about their learning. For instance, in art, pupils in Year 5 discuss the use of stippling, smudging and cross-hatching to create particular effects in their own work.

Leaders have wasted no time in training staff in the school's new phonics scheme. They check how well pupils are learning the curriculum and deliver extra help to those who need it. As a result, staff have strong expertise in phonics, which they use to identify precise next steps for pupils' learning. Pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds they are learning. They read with fluency and

confidence, and enjoy a carefully selected range of literature. Captivating story times help to nurture pupils' love of reading from the early years. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their favourite stories.

Training, and close work between leaders and teachers, supports the delivery of the curriculum. Staff report that this has a positive impact on their practice and workload. Teachers present subject content clearly in class, taking care not to overload pupils and enabling them to focus on the most important content during activities.

Teachers check pupils' understanding, correcting errors and misconceptions. Assessment information is typically used well by leaders to make improvements to the curriculum. However, in some areas of the curriculum, approaches to assessment are more recently introduced. Where this is the case, leaders are less clear about how well pupils have learned the curriculum and how to deepen pupils' knowledge further than they are doing routinely.

Leaders know the needs of pupils with SEND and have high ambition for them. Individual support for pupils with SEND is well devised. Pupils with SEND benefit from adaptations to teaching and resources that support them to learn well alongside their peers.

From the early years upwards, the school has strong routines that support pupils to behave well. Children learn to get along well, take turns and treat one another kindly. Leaders expect regular attendance from all pupils, taking effective steps to understand the reasons for less-than-regular attendance, and put in place support where necessary.

In personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils are introduced to a range of important information, including making healthy food and lifestyle choices, staying safe, including online, and understanding friendships and relationships. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught about different faiths, cultures and backgrounds, and about the importance of treating others with respect.

Leaders, including the governing body and board of trustees, have clearly structured roles that they use effectively to help the school improve its work further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment systems are new and, in some places, still developing. As a result, the school has a less clear picture of how well pupils have learned the curriculum in some subjects. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' learning are used systematically to identify any areas of the curriculum where pupils' knowledge is less secure.
- In a few subjects, teaching is not routinely focused on helping pupils to recall the most important knowledge accurately and to connect it with what they already know. As a result, pupils' recall of knowledge sometimes lacks fluency, and content can become confused. The school should ensure that teaching focuses on helping pupils to understand and recall what they need to know in all subjects.

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	140507
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10290253
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Golding
CEO of the trust	Paula Farrow
Headteacher	Jo Rooney
Website	www.jdacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in January 2014 and is part of Nexus Education Schools Trust.
- Since the last inspection of the predecessor school in 2011, which was judged to be outstanding, there have been changes to leadership, including the school recently joining a new multi-academy trust.
- The school does not make use of 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, science and history.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, and other leaders, including leaders who work within the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance, early years and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the trust board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
David Boyle	Ofsted Inspector
Joel Sager	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2023