

Soho Parish Church of England Primary

23 Great Windmill Street, Westminster W1D 7LF

Inspection dates

23–24 February 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

- Standards of attainment are high. Since the previous inspection, they have risen each year and are at even higher levels than those found nationally.
- All groups of pupils, regardless of their starting points, make rapid progress. The school has sustained its high performance and is in the top 20% of all schools nationally.
- The school is highly effective in supporting pupils to make exceptionally good progress because there is a relentless focus on teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are outstanding.
- Performance is also high because assessment information is used extremely well to track and measure pupils' rates of progress. Meticulous use of this information leads to pupils receiving the best support possible to meet their needs.
- Leaders' unique style of leadership and management provides all staff with ample opportunities to shine. There is a rich blend of talents among staff.
- The headteacher is very well supported by the senior and middle leaders, the governing body, the London Diocesan Board for Schools, and the local authority.
- The school operates smoothly and confirms that staff have a deep understanding of the school's vision, their responsibilities and the systems for running the school.
- The governing body know the school very well. They use their skills to plan ahead, to challenge staff and ensure that no child or group is left behind.
- Governors, with senior leaders and staff, ensure that the motto, 'small school, big heart' is evident in the school's ethos and vision. Equality of opportunity is very well developed within the diverse community.
- British values of respect, tolerance and fairness underpin the school's work and contribute to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' personal growth and development is exceptional, as is their behaviour. Good manners are routine.
- The rich curriculum, extensive enrichment activities and partnership work with local and national partners contribute very well to pupils' development and preparation for the next stage of their education.
- Most parents are very positive about the school's work and all that it offers to their child's personal development. The overwhelming majority would recommend the school to another parent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the leadership and management systems that are in place, and ensure that high-quality teaching and outcomes are sustained over time by:
 - making sure that a larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils exceed the attainment expected for their age nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The school's leaders and managers at all levels are driven by high expectations of outcomes for all pupils and do all that they can to make every aspect of the school's work outstanding. This has been possible because the headteacher has a very clear vision of school improvement and is very well supported by other senior and middle leaders, the London Diocesan Board for Schools, the local authority and all other staff.
- Under the headteacher's exemplary leadership, standards have risen further over the last three years. As a result, the school is very well placed to develop further because there is a strong focus on school improvement, developing future leaders and making sure that staff can develop their professional skills.
- Within this small school, every teacher is seen as a leader and senior leaders make sure that there is a progression route for all staff. For example, support staff indicated they 'feel valued and part of a cohesive team with the class teachers'. A continuous cycle of school improvement enables staff to improve their practice, keep abreast of national, regional and local priorities and address key priorities in the school improvement plan.
- The middle leaders are extremely well focused on their responsibilities and are key players in developing the culture of high expectations. They use assessment information analytically and systematically to track pupils' progress, enabling them to ensure that all pupils can achieve very well.
- Assessment information is very well managed. Regular meetings each academic year between senior leaders and class teachers make thorough use of such information in meticulously analysing the progress of each pupil. Analysis of assessment information generates much information on gaps in teaching and learning and leads staff to identify the most appropriate support needed for pupils. It is not unusual for teaching assistants to contribute to review meetings.
- The monitoring of teaching is excellent. Records show very careful and detailed monitoring of teaching and learning. Leaders and staff know where the strengths and points for improvement lie through a range of monitoring activities. The use of short visits to lessons, accompanied by verbal and written feedback, is continuous, as are reviews. This intense scrutiny prevents lapses in teaching and learning; there is no hiding place for staff.
- The school's relentless focus on developing teaching and learning is linked to the national teachers' standards and the appraisal of teachers' work. Staff are in no doubt about the school's expectations. An outstanding feature of the school's work is the teamwork between teachers and support staff. The supportive structures in place, including joint planning and training together, work efficiently. Additionally, teachers new to the profession are very well supported to develop and reflect on good practice.
- The curriculum is rich and is one of the many outstanding features of the school. It inspires pupils to learn and provides opportunities for staff to maximise the location of the school. The curriculum coverage is carefully and meticulously tracked and reflects the needs and interests of pupils. For example, it provides pupils with insight into other lives and other centuries as they cover interesting themes such as Japan and the Magna Carta, ancient China and modern Africa. Opportunities abound for pupils to know the rich history of London and experience the arts, including national and cultural institutions. Pupils are familiar with Shakespeare's London, having visited and performed in a local theatre. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to learn about and apply enterprise skills. For instance, the construction, engineering and manufacturing project with staff from Rolls Royce has led to pupils talking about their futures as engineers, architects and scientists. This work is allowing them to dream.
- Enrichment activities are extensive and provide pupils with plentiful opportunities to pursue interests such as running the Soho radio programme, forming a rock band, writing their own songs and performing on Soho Radio. This very well-planned and imaginative curriculum opens pupils' minds to possibilities and has a very positive impact on all aspects of their development. This unconventional curriculum not only includes subjects such as Italian and recently Spanish, but it also provides pupils with wonderful and quirky activities that appeal to their learning and their personal, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. The school's ethos and environment lead to pupils knowing that although this is a Christian faith-based school, there is respect for other belief systems. While in assembly, pupils readily explore the power of prayers in other major faiths. Within this context, the school promotes British values very well. Pupils' sense of identity is therefore not lost. They move between cultures and understand the spirit of community, tolerance and respect. Pupils, like their parents, describe their school as a 'community' and say 'We are one'. This

mature understanding of goodwill to all people confirms the school's ethos.

- The school makes sure that child protection and safeguarding procedures are thorough. This includes the checking of staff, risk assessments, training and coverage of topical and national priorities on the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation, children missing education and child sexual exploitation. They work closely with external partners and seek advice and early help to prevent potential cases escalating.
- Full advantage is taken of the pupil premium funding to provide resources to develop pupils' learning. Extra resources, such as staffing, time, or materials, lead to virtually all disadvantaged pupils succeeding as well as other pupils in the school. For example, their outcomes over the last three years, particularly between 2013 and 2014, show that equality of opportunity is pre-eminent in the school's agenda.
- The sport premium funding is used very well to buy in specialist provision from the YMCA, target and boost pupils' fitness and provide them with the opportunity to compete in sports and take part in after-school activities.
- Provision for special educational needs is very well considered and planned. The leadership and management of this work is strong. Pupils' needs are very well met through mapping and careful analysis of information, training and the development of staff with specific skills to maximise the learning of identified pupils. Arrangements for transition to secondary school are also well planned and good care is taken to ensure that parents are briefed and there is very good partnership work with external agencies. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs thrive very well.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is effective and its members are very clear about the strategic priorities and effectiveness of the school, and its future.
 - Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Reviews are regular and are used with external moderations. Governors use these to verify the reports and representations from senior leaders and gain further insight into the school's effectiveness. They visit the school regularly and are very well positioned to validate the accuracy of the school's judgements. This helps them to gain even more information about the quality of teaching, the spending of the pupil premium funding and sport premium. They make sure that teachers' work is appropriately rewarded and linked to agreed targets that extend beyond pupils' performance; these must be met.
 - Governors link their expertise well to different subjects, and use their connections to widen the curriculum provision.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is outstanding

- The school has developed further the quality of teaching found at the last inspection so that over time it is outstanding and leads to pupils deepening their learning and making rapid progress.
- Discussions with pupils, work in their books, and observation and evaluation of teaching, substantiate the view that pupils learn very well over time. This, combined with pupils' desire to learn well, and the very good use of resources, including high levels of support, drives them to make exceptionally good progress.
- Teachers assess pupils thoroughly when they join the school. The information on their level of literacy, numeracy and other skills is used well to set work that challenges them from early years and as they progress through the different year groups.
- High expectations of pupils' work is the norm and leads to pupils confidently self-selecting from the menu of work ranked by difficulty. This ranges through 'mild', 'hot' and 'spicy'. Observation indicates that most select the most challenging tasks: 'hot' and 'spicy'. Pupils are taught how to believe in themselves and develop their thinking.
- Evaluation of what pupils know, understand and can do is a particularly strong feature of teaching. This is exemplified in pupils' books as they are taught to assess how well they know the skills covered. Typically, every lesson is characterised by teachers reviewing the learning intentions and the skills pupils are expected to develop. By the end of lessons, pupils have a very sound grasp of the skills they have acquired and teachers also know the areas of work that require further attention. Evaluation of learning underpins lessons, with teachers asking a range of questions to check pupils' understanding of the work.
- Teachers' excellent relationships with pupils contribute to very well-organised classroom environments that promote learning. This and pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to learn lead to teachers holding their attention very quickly and making very good use of learning time.

- From early years through each key stage, carefully structured activities and well-selected resources capture pupils' imagination and propel them to join in and give their best. Two examples illustrate very well how the imaginative curriculum and resources enthuse pupils. In the Year 1 lesson on transport, past and present, pupils sought answers to questions about different forms of transport through the ages. Excitedly, pupils beavered away at their questions and remained extremely focused with one pupil jumping with excitement as he read out the question to the inspector before returning to his work to concentrate on writing more questions. During this time, he did not want to be disturbed. In the Year 2 music lesson, pupils explored the reggae beats by 'Rasta mouse'. They demonstrated that they could understand and explain their preference for a different form of rhythm.
- A particularly strong feature of teaching and learning is the consolidation of skills, which leads to teachers reinforcing concepts and correcting mistakes. Time is used very well at the start of lessons to review previous skills before pupils move on to the next stage of their learning. This helps teachers to assess how well pupils understand the skills and provides the opportunity for pupils to revisit their learning. Pupils use this time very well to go through their work and correct errors. In this respect, marking is thorough.
- Teachers use talk as a tool to develop learning very well; they develop pupils' use of formal language and their ability to reflect and think before responding. As a result, pupil's articulateness is strong and listening skills are excellent. When pupils speak at length, teachers develop their ability to explain their ideas, contextualise and use subject and complex vocabulary with ease, demonstrated in Reception where children spoke confidently about shapes such as 'cuboid', and 'rectangular prisms', with an alert child identifying 'wonderful Wednesday' as an example of alliteration. Although all words are not always fully explored, this example illustrates how teachers seek to stretch pupils.
- Teachers promote pupils' reading and writing skills very well. From Reception onwards, pupils enjoy reading aloud with expression and understanding. They begin to select from a wide range of genres from early on and develop skills of extracting and summarising the main points of texts. Texts are linked to interests and skills with older pupils in Year 6, for example, reading texts used in secondary schools, such as Sachar's *Holes*. Work in books shows that as pupils progress through the school, they can comment on a writers' style and use of language, while providing evidence to support their interpretation. Handwriting is taught but there is not enough emphasis on children using a more cursive style in Reception.
- Mathematical skills are very well taught and lead to pupils thinking mathematically and giving reasons for their methodology. Discussions with pupils identified mathematics as the favourite subject, primarily because, as a knowledge-based subject, 'the answer', as a gifted and talented boy explained, 'is either "Yes" or "No" and it is a subject that you can express feelings.' They understand the power of numbers to express ideas, particularly as they are stretched to complete complex sums. Setting by ability enables pupils to consolidate their skills and move into higher groups.
- The teaching assistants provide excellent support and are deployed effectively to work with identified pupils and groups, and provide general in-class support. They manage their role effectively; they know the needs of pupils and because they are vigilant they keep them on task very well through their instructive approach and tutoring. Though occasionally the work is done for the children, they are instructive and there are times when it is difficult to distinguish between the class teacher and teaching assistants.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and discussions with them demonstrated that they are extremely articulate about the school's values and ethos. They said, 'We support everyone, no matter what year, what age, what colour, what race.' This maturity belies their years, and emphasises the school's approach to developing pupils' grasp of British values and develops their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values within a diverse society.
- An excellent range of enrichment activities, and all that the curriculum offers, including the residential visits, stimulate pupils to talk with rigour about their school. The curriculum is very rich and allows them to express their creativity, and develop their interests. Pupils know that the school finds ways to nurture their interests and talents. For example, musical talents are encouraged through the curriculum and after-school clubs, and also on offer are sporting activities, playwriting and acting as well as inventing.

Opportunities offered lead to them developing a range of social skills. Consequently, pupils have an increasing awareness of moral concepts of right and wrong; how to respond if they lose and knowing that it is all right to make a mistake. These also contribute to shaping pupils and allowing them to begin thinking about their future lives and potential career.

- Responsibilities as school councillors contribute to them learning about writing a manifesto, voting and pressing for changes. They acquire confidence and can assert their views without fear. Pupils work as part of a team and look out for each other through, for example, older pupils mentoring younger pupils.
- Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe online and know what to do if they have any concerns. Like their parents, they know that the school keeps them safe and their perceptive comment that 'only approved visitors are allowed to enter and wear a badge' reinforces their knowledge that the school keeps them safe. They learn about staying safe during circle time and in personal and social education lessons. Pupils described bullying as 'teasing and silly name-calling'. Their comments confirm the school survey findings, that they are confident in their school's handling of such forms of behaviour, which are rare. They understand wider issues of bullying such as gangs, racist behaviour and religious fear.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite, friendly and welcoming.
- They behave impeccably in lessons and as they move around the limited space in the quirky building. Stairwells are used sensibly and they display good manners with each other. Rules are not readily broken, and exclusions are rare. Where misbehaviour occurs, the school keeps clear records and works with parents and the child to make lasting changes.
- A very good level of tolerance is demonstrated in lessons and around the school when pupils with specific learning and/or emotional needs express themselves. Behavioural incidents linked to pupils with special needs are carefully monitored and dealt with.
- Attendance is average. This is because of the medical needs of a few pupils requiring specific support. However, the school has rigorous procedures in place to track attendance and works very closely with the learning mentor and a range of local authority services to support families and children to attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Standards of attainment are high and have been significantly above average for the last five years in Key Stage 2, and at Key Stage 1 for the last two years. From their starting points in early years through to the end of Year 6, all children and pupils make exceptionally good progress.
- In early years, the majority of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average in 2015. The unusual dip in 2014, when results plummeted, was quickly addressed through a sharper focus on supporting the higher number of pupils with additional needs. The school's work to address the problem was swift and resulted in a much better outcome in 2015. The systematic and rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress means that teachers can quickly identify where support is needed.
- Anomalies were also evident in the phonics check in 2015 which do not accord with outcomes in previous years. This unusual outcome has also been addressed. Evidence indicates that this is a key priority with increased emphasis on additional support and expertise being used to developing good reading skills. Scrutiny of pupils' work and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and reading across the school confirms that the school has reversed this decline and there is now a rigorous approach to teaching early reading skills.
- Virtually all pupils made the progress expected in mathematics, reading and English, grammar and punctuation, with all making the progress expected in writing. In mathematics, 20% reached the highest level possible in the Key Stage 2 national test. This was well above the proportion expected nationally.
- Over time, and in particular during 2013 and 2014, disadvantaged pupils' performance was not significantly different from their peers. These well-above-average standards have been sustained. However, the challenge for the school is enabling the very few pupils in this group to work at the same level as the most able at all times. This is to ensure that the attainment gap does not widen, as it did slightly in 2015 in reading, because of circumstances beyond the school's control. Current assessment data show that the gap between this group and their peers is negligible.
- The most-able pupils perform extremely well and the proportion performing above the standard expected nationally was well above that expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are highly responsive

to the challenges set, as seen in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils demonstrated a high level of thinking in their PowerPoint presentation on 'Space, Time and Black Holes'. The following comments demonstrate this: *'The general theory of space time is based on one of Einstein's discoveries. The theory is that space has a main flow of time and any large enough mass with a general force such as gravity will bend it. Our earth bends the "fabric" of space time because of its gravitational pull...'*; and consider the questions posed by another pupil: *'Why do black holes exist, if the only thing they do is destroy the universe? Could you create a world using dark matter? If so, what would live on it? Nothing?'*

- Pupils with special educational needs and those with a statement or with an education, health and care plan made similarly significantly above average progress.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups also made similarly above average progress. Current assessment in school records shows that they are maintaining the same very good levels of progress.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The learning environment, inside and outside the classroom, supports children's learning very well. They enter into inviting learning zones that lead them to concentrate very well, whether in crafting their paintings, in using equipment and materials such as pipettes or paint, or in persevering with playing dominoes in the correct numerical order. Activities are carefully set up to get them involved and develop their dexterity and other skills.
- Activities test children's ability to work unsupervised and develop skills of resilience and perseverance. During observation, one boy tried his hardest to add '18 + 15'. The task was eventually solved with a little help from an adult but mostly through the child's dogged determination and use of various materials to calculate the sum.
- On entry overall, children are below average but there is a broad range of ability with some being well above and others well below. Nevertheless, from these starting points they make rapid progress, principally because teachers' subject expertise and very good organisational skills are used extremely well to develop high-quality provision that motivates children to enjoy their learning.
- Energetic and whole-class teaching captivates children's attention, as seen when they were taught the 'ue' sound. The theatrical approach, 'my turn' now 'your turn', prepared them well to sound out the letters, recognise them in new words and pronounce them with the minimum amount of help. The more able could read the words aloud unaided. This contributes to children learning very well, particularly through the questioning, which encourages them to make predictions and have a go. Children display confidence to explain and illustrate their ideas and use the interactive whiteboard.
- The organisation and moderation of work in the last academic year provides staff with accurate information about their assessments.
- Very good use is made of children's books to map out their learning journey across a range of areas of learning. This enables the class teacher and other support staff to target planning for future learning. The school actively engages parents in making comments about their children's progress but these are not always used to develop planning. Similarly, the action plans require closer monitoring to ensure clarity about areas for improvement.
- Adults are well deployed and work alongside children through talking and showing them how to do the work as a means of developing a wide range of skills. Adults working with the children track and record their progress in individual assessment profiles. Evidence of children's work captures their progress over time and includes their comments, photographs and examples of written work, drawings and paintings. These show the rapid progress made in developing children's skills in communication, personal development, number work and general knowledge.
- Adults provide and model caring and sensitive relationships with children. This reflects the school's ethos. In turn, children display similarly positive attitudes and behaviour which are excellent. They play together and show that they are very involved in this inclusive school.
- The drive and passion of the early years leader for the arts project draws on, and makes very good use of, the location of the school. This has a very good impact on children's personal, social and emotional development. Children's growth in confidence and happiness fully reflects the school's vision and ethos.
- Strong leadership and management of early years provision and very good professional development for teachers lead to enjoyable and high-quality provision for children.

School details

Unique reference number	101131
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10003543

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	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Simon Buckley
Headteacher	Joffy Conolly
Telephone number	020 7432 4320
Website	http://www.sohoparish.co.uk
Email address	head@sohoparish.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2011

Information about this school

- Soho Parish is much smaller than the average sized primary school with an equal number of girls and boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional government funding, is above average. This funding is used to provide additional support for pupils eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school serves an ethnically diverse community and a high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The main groups are from 'any other White' background, those of British heritage and pupils from Chinese and Bangladeshi backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as a first language is high.
- The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is high but the proportion with a special educational needs statement or education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school is currently heavily oversubscribed with three or more applicants for each available place.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a part of Schools Direct partnership and hosts student teaching sessions.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was converted from a section 8 short inspection to a full section 5 inspection over two days.
- Inspectors observed a range of learning activities, including short visits to lessons and nine lessons. All observations were made jointly with the senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the school improvement partner from the local authority. Discussions were held with three groups of pupils and a few parents. An inspector also spoke with parents who wanted to share their views about the school's work when they were dropping off their children on the second day of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's evaluation and development plan; information on evaluation of teaching and assessment; records of performance management; assessment records of pupils' attainment and progress; information on systems used to protect and safeguard the well-being of pupils at the school and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspectors also took account of the responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, including free text, written responses and the school's surveys based on Parent View. An inspector also spoke with a few parents who shared their views when dropping off their children at school on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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