

Saint Jerome Church of England Bilingual School

120–138 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2DJ

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Roles and responsibilities have not been shared equitably as the school has expanded. Since the school's successful opening, the leadership team has not grown sufficiently to meet the demands of the larger school. As a result, key aspects of the school's work have not been effectively developed or improved.
- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Teaching sometimes fails to meet the needs of the lower-attaining pupils, some of whom are also disadvantaged. Assessment processes do not consistently help teachers to accurately pinpoint precise next steps in learning, particularly in writing.
- There is variability in teachers' subject knowledge and skills in teaching phonics, reading and writing across all phases of the school.
- Leaders do not routinely check that pupils benefit from the full, balanced curriculum outlined in their policies. As a result, pupils' books show that there is often insufficient depth or coverage of work in some subjects, particularly mathematics.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) does not help them to make strong progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors, the head of school and the executive headteacher have established a harmonious school of which many parents and carers speak highly.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from learning French and this is a unique aspect of the school's work.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils are kept safe at school and behave well when teaching supports their needs. They enjoy school and their attendance is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - reviewing senior leaders' roles and responsibilities and developing a leadership team that has sufficient time to effectively develop key aspects of this expanding school's work
 - improving the provision for pupils with SEND so that they are effectively supported to make the best possible progress from their starting points
 - providing professional development for teachers to help them ensure that all pupils, including lower-attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress over time in the range of subjects taught
 - rigorously monitoring the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it reflects the balance outlined in the school's policies
 - supporting teachers in early years and in key stage 1 to improve their subject knowledge and skills in the teaching of phonics, reading and writing
 - ensuring that the learning spaces in early years entice young learners to practise and apply their emerging literacy and mathematical skills.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The head of school, executive headteacher and governors worked exceptionally well together to ensure that the school was opened successfully in 2016 and that a harmonious, small school community was established at that time. Senior leaders are highly valued and respected by the school community.
- However, as the school has grown, governors have not ensured that the significantly increased workload for the senior leaders has been reviewed or distributed. As a result, there is limited leadership time available to effectively develop key aspects of the school's work.
- Despite seeking external evaluations and advice, governors and leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's work. They accurately identified strengths, but evaluations of some aspects of the school's work are over generous, particularly relating to the quality of teaching and to pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders are working hard to identify and develop middle leaders to support them in their work to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Middle leaders are enthusiastic, reflective and keen to improve the school further. However, they lack the guidance, support and professional development necessary to grow into their roles so that they can have a measurable impact on school improvement.
- Leaders have worked hard to build a stable workforce since the school opened and continue to do so as it grows.
- There is currently nobody with the appropriate required training to manage the special educational needs provision in the school. Leaders and staff care deeply about their pupils with SEND, but provision does not yet meet their varying and specific needs.
- The school policy states that the school teaches the national curriculum while also developing its bilingual approach through the teaching of French. While pupils benefit greatly from learning French, this means that time for other subjects, particularly mathematics, is limited. Leaders do not routinely monitor the impact of the focus on French teaching on the depth and volume of work in other subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Professional development has not addressed gaps in teachers' subject knowledge in relation to the teaching of phonics, reading and writing in particular.
- Leaders, governors and parents have ensured that the school is a cohesive community. Staff are proud and happy to work at the school. Many parents are extremely positive about the school's work. Leaders and governors are aware that this is not a unanimous opinion and are proactive in finding ways to improve communication and address any concerns parents have, as the school continues to grow.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Religious education takes a high priority in the school; pupils learn about people and faiths which are different to their own.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively to give pupils access to additional sports and to provide a French-speaking sports coach during lunchtime.

This is part of leaders' plans to immerse pupils in the French language.

- Leaders think carefully about the spending of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged learners. However, the school's pupil premium funding does not currently lead to a sustained impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Attendance has shown recent signs of improvement. For those of statutory school age, attendance is in line with national averages.

Governance of the school

- Governors share senior leaders' vision and commitment to ensuring that Saint Jerome becomes an excellent bilingual primary school.
- Governors have a wide range of skills which equip them well for governance. They are highly supportive of leaders, but also fulfil their challenge role effectively; this is not always reflected fully in governors' documentation. They understand the school's strengths, but despite seeking external views, do not have an accurate view of the areas for development.
- Governors undertake their duties to safeguard children diligently and effectively.
- Governors know their community well and are working hard and effectively to ensure that they improve communication with the harder to reach or less satisfied parents.
- The governing body has not been proactive in ensuring that leadership capacity has grown to support the growth in the pupil population. They have not ensured that an appropriately qualified special educational needs coordinator is in place or in training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors make appropriate checks on staff when they are recruited to the school.
- Staff are kept up to date with regular safeguarding training. They are confident in using the school's referral systems if they have concerns about a child. Safeguarding leaders have appropriate training.
- Staff and leaders are vigilant and monitor any pupils they have concerns about.
- Leaders are aware of the risks of parents parking on yellow lines to drop pupils off in the morning and are proactive in seeking help from the council with this. They recognise that as the school continues to grow, this issue will need to be given further thought. Several parents raised concerns about this aspect of the site's safety. School staff were on duty and vigilant at the start of the day during the inspection to ensure that pupils were kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent and leads to variability in the progress pupils make.
- Teachers are committed to improving their skills and providing a good quality of education for pupils.
- Positive relationships underpin learning in classrooms, but very occasionally teachers struggle to manage a small minority of pupils across the school. This is because the tasks set for these pupils do not match their ability and do not motivate them to engage with learning.
- Provision for pupils with SEND requires improvement because individual learners do not receive the precise support they need to make strong progress.
- There is considerable variability in the teaching of phonics, reading and writing across the school. There are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge which leaders have not been able to support through effective professional development. For example, not all adults responsible for teaching phonics understand fully the requirements of the programme the school uses to teach this key aspect of learning. Adults confuse letters and sounds and sometimes give inaccurate or misleading explanations that confuse pupils, particularly the lower-attaining pupils.
- Similarly, there is a lack of consistency in assessment processes to precisely identify next steps in learning. For example, teachers sometimes over emphasise 'using a capital letter' or 'putting in a full stop' irrespective of the phonics or writing task.
- Teachers do not systematically or routinely support learners to apply their emerging phonics skills in reading and writing in the way in which their chosen phonics programme recommends. This means pupils do not routinely practise and apply the skills they have learned in their phonics sessions sufficiently, and this has an impact on the progress that they make in reading and in writing.
- The school's policy of introducing cursive writing script from the point when children learn their sounds and letters has a negative impact on some of the lowest attaining pupils. This is because they can often recognise the sound and match it to a letter but have not yet developed or been taught the appropriate pencil grip to physically form the letter. Resources recommended by the school's phonics programme, such as magnetic letters, are not used to support these learners to be successful. Books show that some children have continued to use incorrect letter formation from their Reception Year all the way through to Year 2. This affects the confidence they show in writing and the presentation of their work, which is sometimes poor. Poor writing skills also affect progress in other subjects for some pupils, particularly the lower-attaining pupils, some of whom are disadvantaged.
- Teachers in Year 1 have recently introduced group reading activities. These are yet to have the expected impact because books selected are not consistently pitched at the right level to move pupils on in their reading. Some are too easy, and some are too difficult. The quality of teaching in these groups is not consistently strong because adults leading the sessions have not received the professional development required to support them in the teaching of reading.
- Not all classrooms promote or inspire a love of reading through the use of displays or the quality of books made available for pupils to read. Records show that many parents read regularly at home with their children, but the guidance and feedback they receive

from school staff in these records are minimal.

- Pupils enjoy the opportunity they have to learn French at school. Teaching supports all pupils to access the French curriculum, irrespective of whether they speak any French when they join the school. The most competent French speakers are also writing confidently in the language. This is a strength of the school's work.
- Teachers teach the national curriculum alongside French language learning and religious education. Work in the foundation subjects is planned in time blocks. Staff speak French in art, geography and PE lessons to immerse pupils in the language.
- Books show that teachers have consistently implemented the school's mathematics programme, but the volume and depth of work seen did not reflect the amount of time allocated to mathematics according to curriculum planning. Teachers plan fun and engaging science lessons, which pupils enjoy and benefit from.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils are friendly, welcoming and engaging; they are keen to talk about their work and their school.
- When teaching and learning inspire and interest them, pupils show very good and positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils show tolerance and respect for those with different faiths and beliefs to their own. They develop an understanding of British values in a range of ways. Pupils enjoy voting for their school councillors and aspire to be on the school council themselves. The school council contributes well to the life of the school. For example, it made decisions on playground equipment and is involved in selecting prayers from the prayer boxes to which pupils make contributions.
- Pupils said that they feel safe at school. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are tackled effectively by leaders.
- Pupils are confident about keeping themselves safe online. They have been given good guidance on road safety and they are very aware of 'stranger danger'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils play well together and enjoy lunchtimes, which are sociable occasions. As the school population has grown, pupils have coped well and adjusted to sharing the limited space available.
- Attendance has recently improved and is currently in line with national averages.
- Occasionally, when teaching does not meet learners' needs, some individual pupils lose focus and misbehave. Staff work hard to re-focus pupils when this happens.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils in Year 1 attained above the national average in the phonics screening check in 2018.
- The proportion of children who attained a good overall level of development at the end of Reception Year in 2018 was above the national average.
- The very positive information leaders gather about the achievement of pupils who are currently in the school is not fully reflected in the work in pupils' books.
- The progress that pupils make in reading and writing across the school is variable. The depth and range of work seen in mathematics are limited.
- Work seen in Year 2 shows that some pupils have made strong progress in their French studies. Some pupils will be entered for French language tests this year.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is weaker than that of their peers.
- Lower-attaining pupils, some of whom are disadvantaged, make less progress in reading and writing than their classmates.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders with responsibility for early years have an abundance of enthusiasm and passion for early learning. Staff are highly motivated to do their very best for children when they start school. Relationships are kind, warm and nurturing. Children are safe and well cared for.
- However, the variability in the quality of the teaching of writing, and in pupils' outcomes seen in key stage 1, is mirrored in early years.
- Leaders are reflective and proactive and now know precisely what needs to be done to improve provision further. Leaders have effective systems in place to keep a check on the progress children are making, but their judgements on the progress made in writing are not sufficiently accurate.
- The learning spaces in early years reflect all the areas of learning and staff work hard to make learning fun. However, adults do not always move children on or deepen their thinking when they are engaged in activities.
- During the inspection, children played well together, but there were many instances where adults missed the opportunity to offer a well-chosen question or prompt to stretch and challenge children's thinking or help them to make stronger progress. Nonetheless, an adult who was supporting children playing in the sand pit was extremely skilful at getting children to articulate their learning and built on this through his questioning. This was not typical of all interactions between adults and children.
- While all areas of learning are evident in early years, there are limited opportunities for children to apply their emerging phonics and number skills within the different areas of learning or within the well-designed role-play areas.
- Staff are working proactively to improve the attendance of children in the Reception classes as they do not attend as regularly as pupils in key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	142904
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10088858

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Fernandes
Executive Headteacher	Reverend Daniel Norris
Telephone number	0203 019 6363
Website	www.stjeromebilingual.org
Email address	office@stjeromebilingual.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school resulted from a partnership between local volunteer parents and the London Diocesan Board for Schools. It received funding from the Department for Education and opened as a free school in 2016. The school aims to offer 'a unique bilingual learning experience in English and French'.
- The executive headteacher is seconded from another local school for three days a week. The head of school is a full-time employee of the school. The bilingual curriculum leader works at the school for three days a week on a consultancy basis.
- The early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes. The school currently has children in early years and in key stage 1, and will expand into key stage 2 as the school grows.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is

much smaller than average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The largest ethnic groups in the school are White British and White of any other background.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the diocese.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their learning, hear some of them read and hear their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to discuss their work to keep children safe. Inspectors also reviewed the 16 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in the lunch hall, at breakfast club, and as they moved around the building and on the playground.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and took account of the 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of books to see what progress pupils have made across a range of subjects.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Matthews

Her Majesty's Inspector

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